

Stephen Rea
The actor who gets it right
The eye



British Food
The eggs which get their bacon
the magazine



Mark Paddiffe
The DJ who gets us up
the long weekend



Tories stand by their men

Constituencies rally behind MPs in sleaze row

Christian Wolmar and Fran Abrams

The Conservative Party, reeling from a fresh sleaze onslaught yesterday, went on the offensive — rejecting further cash-for-questions allegations, while local parties rallied behind the MPs at the centre of the scandal.

The four MPs who are standing again — Tim Smith, Neil Hamilton, Sir Andrew Bowden and Michael Brown — seemed to retain the support of their constituencies, despite all of them admitting transgressing parliamentary rules and growing disaffection within the national party.

One minister said: "There's a real sense of frustration about what is going on. A lot of my colleagues no longer have an awful lot of sympathy with them. I deeply resent being implicated by association."

John Major, however, fought off claims that he had been dishonest in seeking Mr Smith when it emerged that he had accepted undeclared payments from Mohamed al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. The Prime Minister responded, angrily and speedily by saying that he had taken the quickest possible action possible when, in September 1994, he was alerted to the fact that Mr Smith, then a junior Northern Ireland minister, had accepted bundles of £50 notes to ask parliamentary questions.

Despite Mr Major's denial, the damage to the Tories' first week of the campaign had been done and many of the other sleaze allegations revealed in leaked papers from Sir Gordon Downey's inquiry into the affair remained unchallenged.

The constituency parties are feeling surprisingly kindly disposed to the MPs. Pat Smith, agent for Sir Andrew Bowden, MP for Brighton Kemptown, said: "We totally and utterly support him. We are absolutely cer-



Under a cloud: Neil Hamilton preparing for an interview yesterday at his Knutsford HQ. Photograph: John Voos

INSIDE

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tain that it isn't correct. We don't need assurances, because we have known him ourselves for so long. We have had one message on the answerphone which was obviously a socialist, calling us scum and sleazeballs, but the only other messages have been expressing support."

The publication of extracts by *The Guardian* from the evidence given to the inquiry being held by Sir Gordon infuriated him. Sir Gordon issued a statement saying: "I deplore the action of certain newspapers and other in selectively leaking parts of the evidence to my inquiry."

He implied that the leaks may be misleading because "oral evidence taken in my inquiry was itself subject to a process of correction and further explanation."

Mr Smith, in a letter to Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker of the House, said: "I believe this to be a denial of the fundamental principle of natural justice and a contempt of Parliament and I should be grateful if you will let me know what action you are able to take in this matter."

The *Guardian* is clearly hoping that when Parliament reconvenes, a Labour-dominated Standards and Privileges Committee would take a more lenient view of its leak than the current one which has a Tory majority of one.

Sir Gordon's criticism was seized on by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister. "It is increasingly obvious that Mr Tony Blair and the editor of *The Guardian* have been operating in tandem. I call on Mr Blair to confirm that he respects the view of Sir Gordon Downey and joins me in condemning the actions of *The Guardian* in selectively leaking evidence in contempt of Parliament," he said.

However, Labour steadfastly refused to condemn the leak and continued pressing for the publication of Sir Gordon's report, which Mr Smith also now backs but clearly it will now remain locked away until the new Parliament resumes in May.

Speaking on the BBC's One O'Clock News, Alan Rusbridger, the editor of *The Guardian*, defended the publication. "One of the nauseating aspects of this whole thing is that MPs have been confessing dishonesty in private, then going on television in public saying 'I am innocent, please vote for me,'" he said.

Mr Major took the unusual step of sending over his No 10 press secretary — supposedly a non-party political figure — to brief journalists on his version of events. Mr Major said that as soon as he heard of the allegations about four of his ministers in a private meeting — with Brian Hitchen, the then editor of the *Sunday Express* on 29 September 1994 — he set up an inquiry conducted by Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary.

Sir Robin reported back on 17 October, the Monday after the Conservative party conference, and after a bit more investigation the following day, it was agreed that Tim Smith would have to go. It was to have been announced later that week, and it was a "coincidence" that *The Guardian* published the story on 20 October, the day Mr Smith resigned.



Two killed by Tel Aviv suicide bomb

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

A Palestinian suicide bomber killed two Israelis and wounded 47 yesterday when he exploded a bomb packed with nails and ball-bearings at a bus stop in Tel Aviv.

The attack, coming after work started on a new Jewish settlement in Jerusalem, puts the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians in doubt. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, accused Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, of releasing from jail Islamic leaders known to support suicide bombings.

The bomb went off in the Apropos Coffee House, on Ben Gurion Boulevard, in the centre of Tel Aviv, at about 1.45pm. Among the injured were children wearing fancy dress to celebrate the Jewish festival of

Purim. At least two of the injured were critically wounded. It was the first suicide bomb in more than a year.

Israeli and Palestinian security officers met last night to discuss the deteriorating security situation.

Israel is demanding the re-arrest of leaders of Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation which claimed responsibility for the attack. Mr Arafat may find it difficult to resist a demand that Hamas leaders who praised the bombing at rallies in Nablus and Khan Yunis, in Gaza, should not be rearrested.

The bomber, who was blown apart by the explosion, is believed to have come from a village near Hebron which is under Israeli control. Hebron yesterday saw the worst riots in the West Bank since last September, as boys attacked Israeli soldiers with stones.

Peace hopes faded, page 15

Muslim leader warns of a new assault on US forces

Eastern Afghanistan — From his guerrilla redoubt high in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan, Ossama Bin Laden — regarded by Washington as the West's most dangerous Muslim fundamentalist enemy — has warned Americans of a renewed onslaught against their forces in Saudi Arabia.

In an interview with *The Independent*, the 44-year old billionaire Saudi dissident who led an army of Arab fighters against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, claimed that he had now secured the support of thousands of Pakistanis for his "holy war" — against US troops in the Gulf. He also acknowledged for the first time that his guerrillas had fought street battles against US forces during the ill-fated UN mission to Somalia.

He had, he said, sent faxes to King Fahd and all main departments of the Saudi government, informing them of his determination to pursue a jihad against the Americans; he even claimed that some members of the Saudi royal family agreed with his demand to expel the Americans from the Gulf — an allegation that will only heighten US suspicions that some leading figures in the kingdom covertly support the dissident movement.

I spent the night in Bin Laden's guerrilla camp 8,000 feet up a frozen mountain in

south-east Afghanistan as his Arab mujahedin, wearing camouflage jackets and cowled in kuffiah scarves, patrolled the perimeter ridges armed with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles. The road to the camp had been gouged out of the cliffs and precipices by Mr Bin Laden's followers during their earlier jihad against the Soviet army; a few metres from me, a 20-foot high air raid shelter — cut for hundreds of metres through the rock of the mountainside — provided protection against aerial bombing.

Mr Bin Laden himself, dressed in a white turban and green robes with a Kalashnikov assault rifle beside him, sat on the floor of a tent lit only by a sputtering gas lamp. He heaped praise upon the bombers who slaughtered 24 Americans in the Saudi bombings at Riyadh and Al-Khobar — "a great act in which I missed the honour of participating" — and spoke in a chilling, almost inaudible monotone of his hatred for the American "occupiers" of his country. His claim of Pakistani assistance in his "holy war" will cause deep concern to Americans in Saudi Arabia, where tens of thousands of Pakistanis live as immigrant workers.

Astonishingly — in view of his previous threats against British and French troops in the Gulf — Mr Bin Laden claimed that



ROBERT FISK

EXCLUSIVE

the armies of both countries now provided only a "symbolic presence" in Saudi Arabia, at one point praising Britain for not occupying the Arabian peninsula during the First World War.

He claimed that European nations were now distancing themselves from US policy towards Israel, singling out the European vote against Israel in the UN Security Council debate on the new Jewish settlement on occupied Arab land outside Jerusalem.

But if British and French troops in the Gulf can now sleep a little easier in their beds — in itself a doubtful premise — the Americans appear to face another spate of bombings. "This is the first time in 14 centuries that the land of the two shrines [Mecca and Medina] has been occupied by non-Islamic forces," he said.

"In the past, the Americans didn't meet with real resistance from Muslims because scholars

working for the Saudi government misled the people by saying the Americans were providing them with protection. But now, the Muslim nation understands the truth and Pakistanis have allied themselves with us to expel the Americans. Pakistani religious thinkers are issuing fatwa against them."

If Mr Bin Laden's view of America bordered on the eccentric — at one point, he suggested that individual US states might secede from the Union because of Washington's support for Israel — his historical perspective was deeply disturbing. "We believe that God used our holy war in Afghanistan to destroy the Russian army and the Soviet Union — we did this from the top of this very mountain upon which you are sitting — and now we ask God to use us one more time to do the same to America, to make it a shadow of itself."

But he was confident. "We also believe that our battle against America is much simpler than the war against the Soviet Union, because some of our mujahedin who fought here in Afghanistan also participated in operations against the Americans in Somalia — and they were surprised at the collapse of American morale. This convinced us that the Americans are a paper tiger."

Full interview, page 14

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Campaign for jailed Guards attacks lethargy on review

A group campaigning for the early release of two Scots Guards who were jailed for life for killing a Belfast man while on patrol today accused the Northern Ireland office of "dragging their feet" over reviewing the case.

Supporters of soldiers Jim Fisher and Mark Wright have condemned civil servants and the prison service for "lethargy" in examining the case after High Court judge Mr Justice Givan ordered a review of the sentence last December. And ex-soldier General Murray Naylor who is leading the campaign called on Northern Ireland secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew to release the two men before the General Election. Wright, 23, from Arbroath and Fisher, 28, from Ayr, have been in custody since they shot dead unarmed Peter McBride while on patrol in the Province in 1992. They were sentenced to life imprisonment after being found guilty of murdering McBride. The trial had heard that they thought the youth was carrying a coffee-jar bomb.

The men's supporters say they have the backing of hundreds of ex-servicemen who have written to their MPs about the case. The release group is planning to send a delegation to Downing Street to hand over letters of support to the Prime Minister.

Pupils at horror school disciplined

Three pupils at the Ridings School, dubbed the worst comprehensive in Britain, were disciplined over allegations that workmen called in to repair broken windows were attacked, the headteacher said yesterday. Calderdale Education Authority confirmed an investigation had been launched into claims that a van used by the contractors was damaged.

Peter Clark, headteacher at the Ridings in Halifax, West Yorkshire, said: "There was an incident on Wednesday when mud was thrown at a van by three children who have been identified and punished." He added: "Reports that a gang of pupils pelted the workmen with stones are widely exaggerated."

The three pupils involved were punished with sessions of detention.

France salutes brave yachtsman



A British lone yachtsman is to be awarded with France's highest medal of honour for bravery after he risked his life to save a rival Frenchman on a stricken boat.

Pete Goss, 35, abandoned his position in a gruelling non-stop round-the-world race after he was informed Raphael Dinelli had sent out an SOS in the Southern Ocean. He changed course and headed for the foundering yacht, 160 nautical miles away, and pulled Dinelli on board his 50ft vessel *Aqua Quorum*. President Jacques Chirac has nominated the former Royal Marine for the Legion D'Honneur, France's highest accolade for bravery. He will be awarded with the medal on his return to France today.

A spokesman for Mr Goss, of Torpoint, Cornwall, said: "He is very proud." Mr Goss is the only Briton to have completed the Vendée Globe race, which set off from Les Sables D'Olonne four-and-a-half months ago. He is expected to finish 5th in the race.

Index of drug addicts to go

Doctors will no longer be legally bound to inform the Home Office when they treat drug addicts, ministers have announced. Home Office Minister Tom Sackville is to call on Parliament to abolish the Addicts Index, which ensures statistics on drug use are kept up to date. Drug abuse pressure groups claim the system has collapsed because doctors are too busy to fill in the forms. The Government plans to close the Addicts Index at the end of March.

Mr Sackville said: "Reliance for information on the nature of drug misuse will henceforward rest mainly on the Department of Health's Regional Drug Misuse Databases." The new system will not lessen the fight against drugs, Mr Sackville pledged.

Bomb scare on Air France jet

Irish Army bomb disposal experts were yesterday examining a suspicious object found in the hold of an Air France Airbus diverted to Shannon Airport in County Clare in the west of Ireland. The aircraft was en route from Paris to Mexico City on Thursday night when the airline received a telephone warning. The object was found once passengers' luggage was identified, after the jet was moved to an isolated area.

Alan Murdoch - Dublin

Glasgow sheds 70 in job cuts

Glasgow City Council yesterday announced the loss of 70 jobs as part of cuts to urban community projects - more than 100 fewer redundancies than was feared. A rally outside the City Chambers was heavily policed, to avoid a repeat of last week's stormy demonstration when 1,000 people tried to prevent the council setting its budget.

Barrie Clement

Master of the short story dies

VS Pritchett, a master of the English short story, has died at age 96. Pritchett died on Thursday at Whittington Hospital, said his son, Oliver Pritchett. Knighted in 1975 for services to literature, Pritchett published more than 40 books of short stories, novels, essays, literary criticism, travel and autobiography. He was noted for his brilliant portraits of people in his stories and journalism. From 1926 he was a contributor to the left-wing weekly *New Statesman*. His books included a biography of the Russian writer Anton Chekhov and the travel book *Dublin: A Portrait*. He edited the *Oxford Book of Short Stories* in 1981.

AP - London

Farmers get paid for sinking feeling

A water company is to compensate farmers whose land has been affected by subsidence caused by groundwater extraction. Severn Trent Water's scheme will allow an independent panel of experts to assess claims for compensation. The new procedure has already been used to assess three test cases, resulting in payments being made. The National Farmers' Union has hailed the move.

people



OJ Simpson: Legal costs have stretched his resources. Now he may lose his home.

Hard times for Simpson as bank calls him to account

OJ Simpson will face the ultimate indignity of being turfed out of his Los Angeles mansion if he does not come up with mortgage arrears in the next three months, it emerged yesterday.

A mortgage company has started foreclosure proceedings against the former footballer and film actor because he has missed \$86,000 in payments on his mansion in the exclusive suburb of Brentwood, according to yesterday's *New York Post*.

Under California law, Simpson has 90 days to pay the money he owes to Hawthorne Savings, which financed the house. If he does not pay, the company has the right to sell the property at an advertised public auction.

The exclusive address - 360 Rockingham Avenue - means the two-story Tudor-style mansion, complete with driveway flanked by 2ft-high statues of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, would fetch millions.

In 1995, Simpson was cleared in criminal court in 1995 on charges of stabbing to death his former wife,

Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman in Los Angeles, in June 1994. But he was held liable for the deaths in civil court this year.

The selling of the mansion would, however, be complicated by the \$19m suit that Ron Goldman's father has filed against Simpson's home. Fred Goldman, who pursued the case against Simpson in a civil court after his acquittal on criminal charges, wants any money from the sale of the house to go toward the \$19m a civil jury awarded him in damages after finding that Simpson was responsible for the deaths.

Mr Goldman's lawyer, Peter Gilpin, was quoted as saying that the mortgage company would have first option on the Brentwood estate.

A review of court records showed Goldman was about 10th in line of creditors to whom Simpson was indebted, the list includes the lawyers who represented Simpson in both the criminal and civil trials.

Clare Garner

Laker extends his reach for the sky

Sir Freddie Laker, high-flying king of cut-price air fares, is going up-market. Yesterday, just over 15 years after the banks pulled the plug on his original airline, he expanded his relaunched operations with a daily flight direct from Gatwick to Miami.

Ever buoyant, Sir Freddie resurrected his airline a year ago, with a limited transatlantic service. The new Laker Airways Inc is a private corporation, formed in 1995, and is owned jointly by Sir Freddie and a US businessman.

Yesterday also saw the launch of a first class service on the airline. Previously his aircraft had an egalitarian one-class system. Sir Freddie shunned business and first class, insisting that telecom improvements would soon do away with the need for business travel.

But the inclusion of this high-margin luxury service is a clear reflection of the need to provide something more than just a cut-price flight in an increasingly competitive market.



Sir Freddie, 74, checked-in at Gatwick to join passengers on the first daily Miami flight.

He chatted to them as they queued to board and gave one unhappy traveller an instant £80 cash handout from his own wallet to compensate him for difficulties he had had changing his tickets.

Sir Freddie said: "I'm thrilled this morning. It's taken me 15 years to get back to a daily service. I've no time to feel bitter about what happened - that was yesterday. Now we are thinking of tomorrow and the day after, and planning new ways to expand."

Paedophile priest is extradited

The paedophile priest Father Brendan Smyth was yesterday released from prison in Northern Ireland and immediately extradited to the Irish Republic to face 74 charges of sexual assault and indecent assault.

The failure of the attorney general's office in Dublin over seven months in 1994 to process the 71-year-old Norbertine priest's extradition led to the collapse of the last Irish coalition government and the departure as Taoiseach of Albert Reynolds.

The West Belfast-born priest was jailed for four years in June 1994 after pleading guilty in Belfast to 17 charges of sexual offences against five girls and three boys between 1964 and 1988, among them three members of one family.

The first extradition attempt was sought after he declined to make himself available to the RUC.

Yesterday a crowd of 150 shouted abuse as a police convoy brought Smyth to and from the courthouse at Limavady, County Londonderry from Magilligan Prison. The new charges referred to in the extradition warrants alleged offences against 20 victims since 1969.

Alan Murdoch, Dublin

It's Dollywood as Tinseltown sees double

Dolly the Sheep may already be a double - but can she act the part? The world's first cloned sheep is being courted by TV and film companies anxious to sign up the woolly star.

Staff at the Roslin Institute, in Midlothian, acting as Dolly's agent, have been inundated with requests from all over the world for the seven-month-old clone to do everything from appear on magazine-style chat shows to starring in documentaries. Even Hollywood has expressed an interest.

"We knew there would be a lot of interest in Dolly from the scientific world, and we expected some from the popular press, but the response we got was overwhelming," said Dr Harry Griffin, assistant director at the institute.

"We have had a wide range of inquiries from people looking to sign Dolly up, either to get her on their

television show or do features on her," continued Dr Griffin. "Some of the requests have been rather bizarre, but I don't want to offend anyone by going into great detail. All I am saying is that I don't think the world is quite ready for Dolly keyrings yet."

Whilst the scientists are still reeling from the intensity of interest, Dolly is taking the stardom in her stride. "She seems a very happy, fairly tame sheep and she is getting very the sight of photographers," added Dr Griffin.

20th Century Fox has contacted the institute to ask the scientists who bred the famous ewe from a single cell if they would consider being technical advisors on a film they have in the pipeline, in which cloning will play an important part in the plot. Dr Griffin said he was keeping details of any offers firmly under wraps.

Clare Garner

briefing

TRANSPORT

Jambuster plan to abolish road tax and petrol duty

A radical "jambuster" plan to scrap car and fuel taxes and make motorists pay an average £600-a-year in road charges instead was outlined yesterday. Drivers would pay an average of 11.7p per mile in charges which would raise about £30bn to improve roads and public transport, said a research paper from The Centre for Economics and Business Research.

At this rate, it would cost an average car-owner with an annual total of 10,000 miles about £1,200 each year. But £600 of this would be offset by the abolition of the road fund licence and the duty element in the price of petrol, and roads could become virtually jam-free.

The report's author, Professor Douglas McWilliams, said roads had to be treated like any other public utility, with increased private-sector provision and charging for usage. He suggested investing part of the receipts from charging in improving the road system to increase its efficiency and environmental acceptability. Other cash from the funds raised could be used to improve public transport.

The Government is currently testing motorway tolling equipment, which is to undergo trials on the M3 in Hampshire, but there has still been no firm decision on whether tolls will be introduced.

HEALTH

Wine buffs in teeth of a dilemma

Wine buffs risk finding that all they have left in their mouth is a sensitive palate, dentists warn today. Slooshing wine around the mouth like the experts do can cause serious erosion to tooth enamel.

The British Dental Association highlighted the case of a 52-year-old wine merchant referred to Guy's Hospital, London. His teeth were so eroded that the fillings were protruding.

The problem is not tooth decay caused by bacteria, but acid in the wine eating away the enamel.

The wine merchant had begun tasting wine professionally in 1959, and had tasted an average of 30 wines a day. When he first went to Guy's in 1982, it was calculated that his teeth had been subjected to 245,000 acidic exposures over the previous 23 years.

Reporting on the case in the *British Dental Journal*, dentists from the hospital said tooth erosion was probably an occupational hazard of wine tasting.

A small volume of wine is rinsed around the mouth to reach every area of the palate before it is spat out. Unfortunately, this also soaks the teeth in acid.



ENTERTAINMENT

Cinemas enjoy blockbuster year

Cinema attendances shot up last year to 112.1 million - the highest for at least a decade. The record confirms a rise in the popularity of film and the reversal of the 1980s trend when the growth of the home video market meant fewer and fewer people bothered to go.

Last year's attendances were boosted by the popularity of films such as *Independence Day*, *Mission Impossible* and *101 Dalmatians*. However, admissions dipped sharply in the fourth quarter of last year, with a 19.2 per cent fall on the third quarter.

The Office for National Statistics, which released the numbers, also estimated there were 1,757 screens operating in 483 cinemas across Britain.

But despite the rise in attendances, the new figures are still barely a tenth of those from cinema's heyday in the 1930s and 1940s, before the advent of television.

RAILWAYS

Private operator fails time test

Punctuality rates plummeted on the crisis-stricken South West Trains route last month. The private rail operator, run by bus company Stagecoach, reached 74.1 per cent punctuality for its main line services, against its Passenger's Charter target of 89 per cent.

Its suburban service punctuality figure for February was 85.6 per cent against its charter target of 92 per cent, according to figures supplied by the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising to the pressure group Save Our Railways.

February's reliability figures were also below par on SWL. It cut 39 trains a day from 17 February because of a driver shortage and faces the threat of a £1m fine unless services improve next month.

Main-line reliability was 97.6 per cent, against a charter target of 99 per cent while suburban service reliability was 95.8 per cent compared with the charter target of 99 per cent.

HOUSING

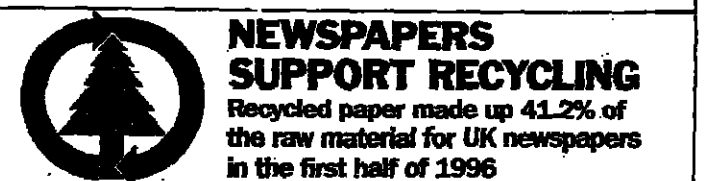
Call for 200,000 new homes

The Government should undertake to build 200,000 new homes a year on some of Britain's most derelict land, according to the Royal Institute of British Architects. In a report highly critical of the main political parties, the institute asserts that housing problems are being ignored.

It argues that the next government must develop a unified housing policy, by increasing investment, to end housing ghettos.

The RIBA president, Owen Luder, said: "Housing has all but dropped off the political agenda. Government should view spending on housing as an investment. We need to give incentives to the private sector to provide imaginative housing solutions."

Nicole Veash



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

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Fine for boy who hacked into Pentagon

Jason Bonnetto
Crime Correspondent

A British teenager who got a D grade in A-level computer science was fined yesterday for hacking into United States defence and missile systems and removing files on artificial intelligence and battle management.

Richard Pryce, was only 16 when he used a basic £750 computer from his bedroom in north London to infiltrate

some of America's top security establishments.

Codenamed Datastream Cowboy, Pryce, now 18, was the subject of allegations in the US Senate, where the unknown "spy" was accused of "causing more harm than the KGB". He has also been described as "the number one threat to US security".

But his solicitor insisted yesterday that it was a "schoolboy prank" and that the teenager with just six months experi-

ence had used information taken off the Internet to break into the US networks. Lawyers believe the case shows the extraordinary lax security deployed within US military systems.

Pryce was fined £1,200 plus £250 cost yesterday after pleading guilty to 12 charges of gaining unauthorised access to computer systems in March and April 1994. He has now dropped his interest in computers in favour of a double bass which he studies at the Royal

College of Music in London.

The first that Pryce's parents, Nick and Alison, knew of their son's activities was when members of Scotland Yard's Computer Crime Unit arrived at the home in Colindale, north London, to arrest him.

Bow Street Magistrates' Court heard that Pryce managed to hack into the Griffiss Air Force Base in New York, where it is alleged he downloaded material about artificial intelligence and battlefield manage-

ment systems. He also broke into the Lockheed Space and Missile Company in California.

The systems he was said to have obtained access to included those for ballistic weapons research, and aircraft design, payroll, procurement, personnel records and electronic mail. The infiltration led to allegations that a spy had managed to infiltrate secret intelligence data.

His hacking was described as an example of a growing and se-

rious threat to US national security in reports and testimony to a Senate committee by the US General Accounting Office.

Some of the more outlandish allegations about the effects of Pryce's hacking exploits were later seen as an attempt to obtain extra funding. Indeed, US officials later insisted that Pryce had been unable to access any secret information.

Despite those claims it is understood that the British authorities were considering using

a Public Immunity Certificate, a gagging order, to cover part of the hearing, but decided not to bother after the more serious charges were dropped.

Geoffrey Robertson QC, for the defence, said that what the Pentagon had at first suspected a European spy-ring later discovered was a 16 year old in north London. "He was riding, rather than surfing, the Internet. He made no profit and there was no subversion of defence systems," he said.

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

Five great sections for the very best in Sunday journalism



THE GOSPEL TRUTH?

Patrick Cockburn reports from Jerusalem on sensational new research which could change our understanding of the Easter story

PLUS:
GIRLS BEHAVING AFFLUENTLY
The battle for the female pound

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT
Douglas Hurd looks back on his last week in the House of Commons

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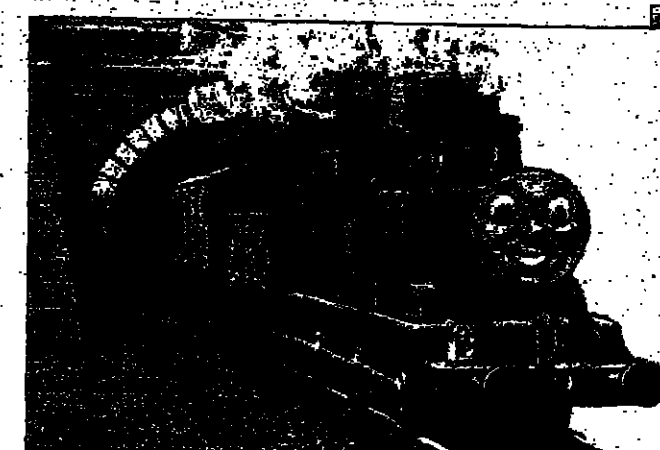
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IT IS... ARE YOU?



Thomas's creator dies after making a storybook fortune

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

The Reverend Wilbert Vere Awdry, who created Thomas the Tank Engine, died yesterday aged 85, more than half a century after his first stories graced bookshelves.

Despite the disappearance of steam from the national train set, his books about talking, puffing locomotives still entrance millions of children and have ended up on the stock market in a company worth £30m. The author died at his modest Edwardian terrace in Stroud, Gloucestershire, where he had been bed-ridden for some time. He retired from writing in 1972 after the first 26 books in the series and the role was taken over by his son Christopher.

Thomas was his most famous creation. But his book *The Three Railway Engines* centred on three engines, Edward, Gordon and Henry, and their trundlings over the Island of Sodor - a mythical construct situated near Barrow-in-Furness. The 40 books have sold more than 10 million copies worldwide and been broadcast in Japanese and German.

In an age where children could blast aliens or surf the Internet, many still choose to turn the pages of the books and tune in to the televised version of *World of Thomas the Tank En-*

gine, narrated by the former Beatle Ringo Starr.

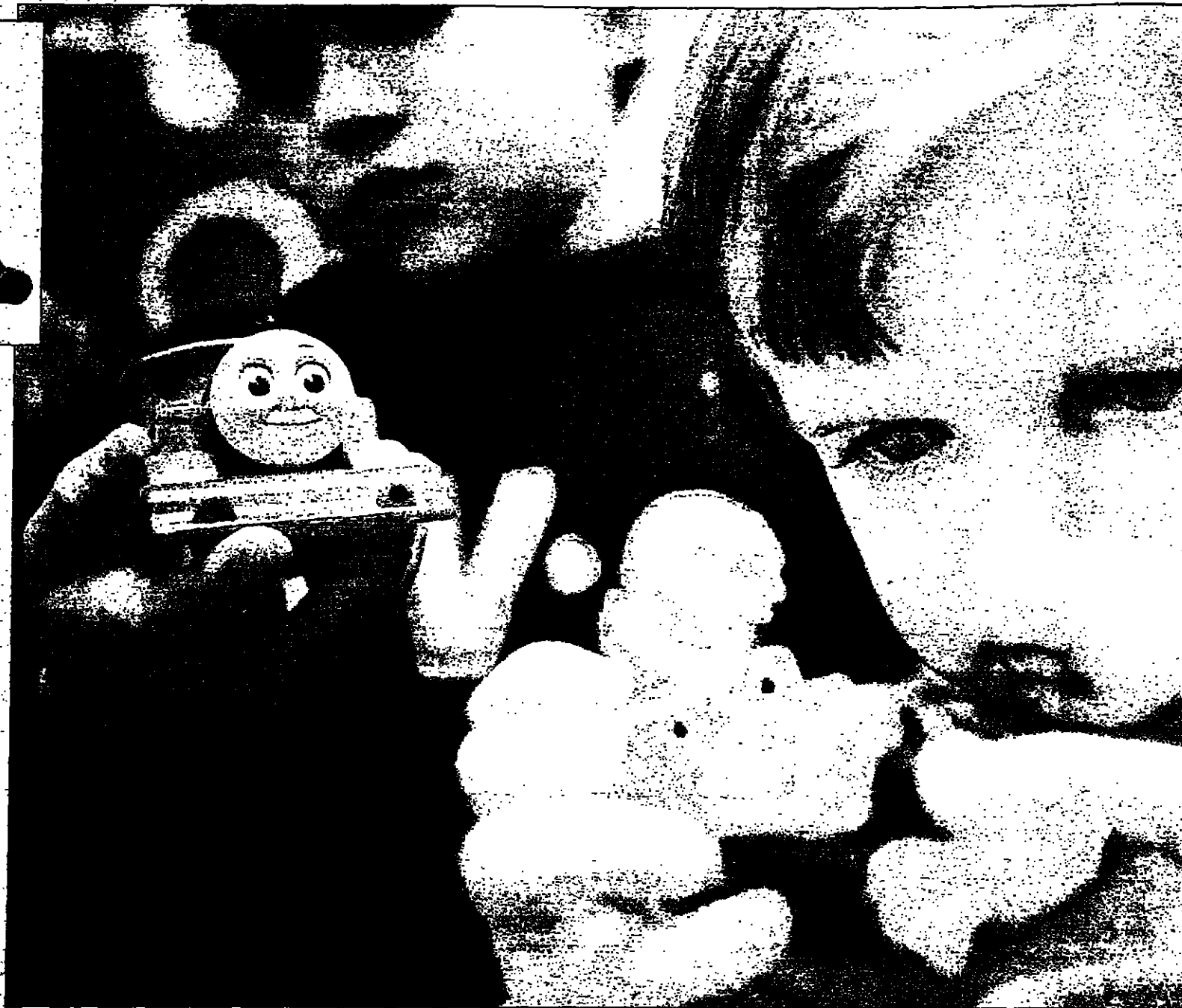
"It is a great tribute to Awdry, how popular his books still are. We had a Thomas the Tank Engine event in February and we had more than 40,000 people turn up," said Dieter Hopkin, head of library and archive collections at the National Railway Museum in York.

Perhaps the reason for the books' success can be found in their origins. The first tales were meant to entertain his son, Christopher, during a bout of measles. When Mr Awdry's wife noticed the stories scribbled on the backs of Mother's Union circulars, she got them sent to a literary agent. Overnight in 1945, Thomas steamed up the publishing express line to a runaway success.

And so Henry, the Green Engine, Gordon the Blue Engine, Thomas, the Fat (and Thin) Controller came to life. The slim blue volumes were eagerly snapped up for children deprived of fresh publishing and writing during the war years.

The delight of millions of parents and children did not escape criticism and controversy.

The books were accused of racism, with references to the sooty black engines, and of sexual stereotyping, with macho, hero engines and passive (or argumentative) carriages named



Stoked up: Children (above) in Hamleys, London, which has a Thomas the Tank Engine section, and a cover (left) Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

after women (Annie and Clarabel).

Many experts on the modern railways saw Mr Awdry as a relic of yesterday's network. One spoof, written in *Modern Railways*, a trade magazine, was a pastiche replete with Rastafarian dialects and "socially relevant" locos enlivened with mock-medieval phrases.

The criticism was not always fair. The more recent books - written by Christopher Awdry - did incorporate British Rail engines and featured the express 125s in later stories. And Mr Awdry's influence was acknowledged by Lord Lloyd-Webber as important in the creation of his *Starlight Express* show.

Mr Awdry remained a keen railway enthusiast and eventually became president of the Dean Forest Railway Company. The group, which reopened a line in Gloucestershire, named one of its three steam locomotives Wilbert after the author.

The train became the subject of the 38th book in the Thomas the Tank Engine series, *Wilbert the Forest Engine*, written by Christopher Awdry.

A spokesman for the group said: "He used to come down here to sign his books, and he seemed to be involved with almost every rail-preservation group going."

"He'd been a long-standing enthusiast of the railways and it seemed quite a common thing for men of the cloth to be interested in that sort of thing. It's a great shame and a sad loss." Asked why rail and church, an odd coupling, were his passions, Mr Awdry said: "Both had their heyday in the mid-nineteenth century; both own a great deal of Gothic-style architecture, which is expensive to maintain; both are regularly assailed by critics; and both are firmly convinced they are the best means of getting man to his ultimate destination."

Obituary, page 22

Footballer falls foul of the rules as he shows his political colours

Nick Harris

Robbie Fowler could be in trouble with the football authorities after he became the strikers' striker with a show of solidarity for 500 sacked Liverpool dockers during a European Cup-Winners Cup match on Thursday.

Fowler, 21, reported to have recently signed a new contract worth £20,000 per week, lifted his Liverpool shirt after scoring his second goal in the 3-0 victory against Norwegian team Brann Bergen, to reveal a T-Shirt underneath which read: "500 Liverpool dockers sacked since 1995." The slogan refers to dock workers sacked in industrial disputes by the Mersey Ports and Harbours Authority.

Rules laid down by Uefa, the sport's governing body in Europe, prohibit players from wearing political slogans or logos and a spokeswoman said yesterday: "We are waiting on the reports from the match officials, and then the matter will be discussed on Tuesday to see if there will be any further action."

In Liverpool yesterday, Fowler and team-mate Steve McManaman, who provided the shirt, were being hailed as heroes by dock workers.

Bobby Morton, a spokesman for Merseyside Port shop stewards, said: "Our reaction to Robbie Fowler's display was one of delight as we've suffered an effective media blackout on this issue, and now it's in the news."

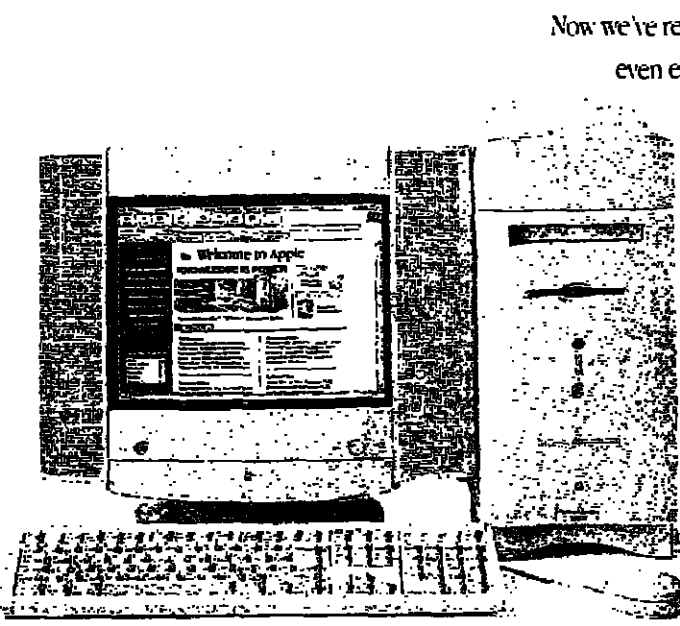
He added: "Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman are both local lads, they both come from working class families, and we're glad of their support."

Mr Morton also said Fowler and McManaman had made financial donations to the sacked workers' hardship fund.

However, Fowler's employers took a dim view of politics on the pitch. "We will be pointing out to all our players that comments on matters outside of football are not acceptable on the field of play," a statement by Liverpool Football Club said. "While players are free to have their own opinions, Uefa rules discourage any show of support during matches."

There is little precedent in such cases, although the Swiss national side were cautioned by Uefa in 1995 after wearing a small flag on their kits saying "Stop Jacques Chirac", in protest at France's policy on the testing of nuclear weapons. No fine or further disciplinary action was taken.

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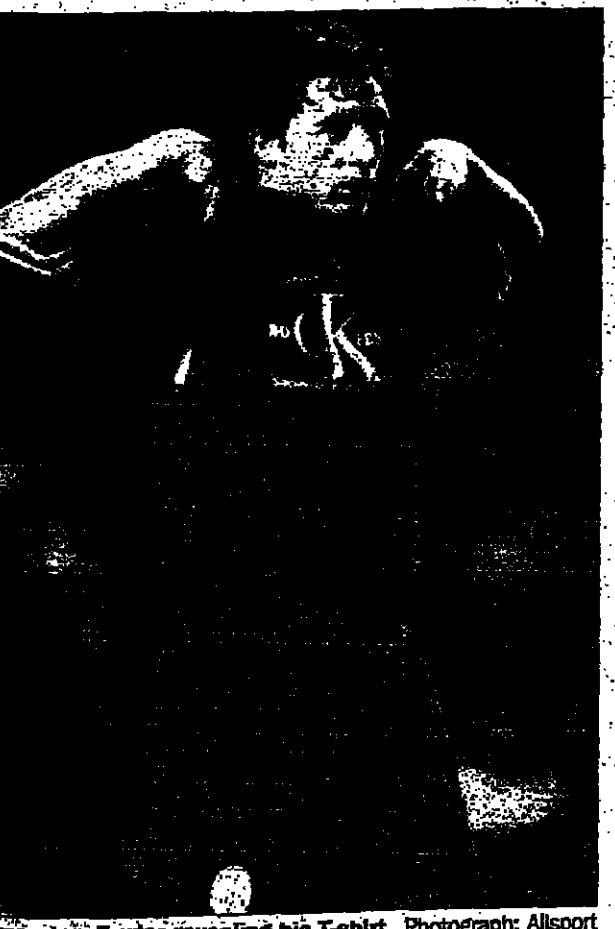
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Supporter: Fowler revealing his T-shirt. Photograph: Allsport

news

Tories accused of tobacco industry pay-off

Government deal allows addictive chemical cocktail to be added to cigarettes

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Tories last night were accused of giving a "pay-off" to the tobacco industry by concluding a voluntary ten-year deal on additives which campaigners said would help to keep smokers hooked on the habit.

The tobacco industry is one of the big backers of the Tory Party election fund, and Ian Greer Associates - at the centre of the cash-for-questions scandal - acted as one of the lobbyists in the past.

The deal threatens to reopen the controversy over the relationship between the Conservative Party and the tobacco

barons during the election. The deal, allowing the industry to continue putting around 600 additives in tobacco products, was slipped out in a written Commons answer hours before the House rose on Thursday night for the election recess, although officials said it had been signed on 7 March.

"The additives can release the nicotine in the tobacco which makes it more easily absorbable. You can argue that some of these additives are designed to keep the smoker hooked," said a spokeswoman for Ash, the anti-smoking campaign.

"It is another example of the cosy relationship between the

Government and the industry, which is a significant donor to Tory funds. This is probably the pay-off."

A Department of Health spokeswoman said the additives were to increase flavour to enable the tar levels to be lowered. But Ash said: "There are no real health gains from smoking lower tar cigarettes because smokers tend to inhale more deeply. It is counter-productive."

Chris Smith, Labour spokesman on health, is committed to banning tobacco advertising as part of Labour's campaign to bring in tougher public health measures and curb the rise in teenage smoking. "The Conservatives must

come clean about their relationship with the tobacco industry and how much money they receive from them," he said.

The former prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was paid around £500,000 a year as a consultant for Philip Morris. Marlboro also paid £1m to subsidise an 800-guest, £15,000-a-table 70th birthday party in Washington DC. The Thatcher Foundation raised £1.5m.

Mr Smith wrote to Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Party Chairman, and a former health minister, this week calling for him to disclose details of the donations from the tobacco industry to party funds.

It followed the publication of the cross-party Commons Public Accounts Committee report, showing that it was "dismayed by the rise in teenage smoking", in breach of the targets set in the Government white paper, *The Health of the Nation*. The committee noted that the Government had failed to reach its 1994 target of six per cent of 11-15-year-olds smoking, and it had seen a rise in the proportion of smokers in this age group to 12 per cent.

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association was unable to provide details of the additives last night. "There is nobody here that can explain that," said a spokeswoman.

History of cash and support

Paul McCann

The Conservative Party has a long history of receiving cash and assistance from tobacco companies, especially during general elections.

Since just before the last election the party has been given at least £500,000 from the industry according to Labour Research, a trade union-funded research body.

Lord Hanson's Imperial Tobacco gives £100,000 every year to the party while Rothmans International gave £100,000 before the last election. Labour Research cannot be sure that the Tories do not also receive

funds from the tobacco industry through overseas subsidiaries it cannot track.

British-American Tobacco has said it does not donate to actual parties in the UK, but has admitted to funding right-wing think tanks. Lord Hanson's support has been especially strong, although he is understood to have become disillusioned with the party since it ousted Mrs Thatcher as leader.

At the last two general elections, Imperial turned over as many as 2,000 poster sites to the Tories as soon as the election was called. Because cigarette advertisers are banned from using television, the tobacco companies

traditionally dominated the outdoor advertising market and had the best-positioned hoardings signed up in long-term deals. This gave the Tories a considerable advantage when the scramble to book sites started.

The links between tobacco companies and the Tories include paid MPs. Sir Jim Lester, MP for Broxtowe, is a paid parliamentary consultant for BAT Industries, earning between £10,000 to £15,000. Rothmans £10,000 to £15,000 as an adviser, while Nirj Deva, Conservative MP for Brentford and Isleworth takes no fee as an adviser

to the same company. Former Home Secretary Kenneth Baker is a non-executive director of Hanson plc.

After the last general election the Tobacco Manufacturers Association, the industry's representative body, renegotiated its voluntary agreement with the government on the regulations that cover tobacco advertising.

The tobacco industry agreed to cut back its spending on advertising on posters by 40 per cent and agreed to take down posters from anywhere near schools. It also agreed to remove its advertisements from magazines read by young women under the age of 24.



Lady Thatcher: Support from Imperial Tobacco



Shock tactics: One of the five dramatic posters in the latest Dutch anti-smoking campaign aimed at reducing the numbers of teenagers who smoke. Photograph: Reuters

All companies now under siege in US

David Osborne
New York

The once-invincible tobacco industry is under siege in the United States in the wake of admissions by the Liggett Group, that smoking can be lethal and that it has marketed cigarettes to children.

David Kessler, the former head of the Food and Drug Administration, turned the spotlight yesterday on the practice of luring children into the nicotine habit. California, meanwhile, unveiled a \$22m (£13.6m) television and billboard advertising campaign that aims to vilify the cigarette companies.

Now cast as the turncoat of his own industry, Bennett LeBow, the owner of Liggett, was expected to release a personal statement acknowledging past sales efforts aimed at children and pledging to end the policy. "Liggett condemns this practice and will not market to children," a draft of it said.

Mr LeBow's statement will serve as a dramatic personal postscript to Liggett's historic decision on Thursday to settle with

the 22 US states that are suing the entire industry for billions of dollars in damages for the cost to taxpayers of treating victims of smoking-related diseases.

A court hearing is set for 31 March for the other four main tobacco companies to seek to prevent Liggett from handing over potentially explosive documents to help the states pursue their lawsuits. The documents threaten to demonstrate that the companies concluded over three decades to cover up what they knew about the addictive and medically-damaging nature of cigarettes.

Liggett has already released to the media some excerpts which it believes are not subject to any court restraining order.

One 1966 document debates withholding information about the cancer risks. "How far would publication affect the likelihood of proceedings being instituted?" it begins. "In the short term it is obvious that non-publication of the report could have no practical effect unless, and until it became known that the [cancer] data were available but had not been published."

Mr Kessler, who until his recent resignation drove efforts by the US government to subject cigarette sales to strict controls, predicted widespread public disgust with the revelations now being made by Liggett.

"For one of the major tobacco companies to admit that they marketed to children, that's striking," he said yesterday. "I think it will make the average person just angry."

Brown & Williamson, the number-three producer in the US and a subsidiary of London-based British American Tobacco, is joining with Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco to try to minimise the damage from the Liggett move. The credibility of Liggett will be attacked because the company joined the whole industry in telling Congress in 1993 that cigarettes were not addictive.

"It does not take a rocket scientist to see that testimony offered for the first time as part of a settlement arrangement will have a credibility problem," claimed David Bernick, a lawyer representing Brown & Williamson.

'This is the start of the facade cracking'

Annabel Ferriman

Liggett's admission that cigarettes do cause cancer and are addictive is likely to boost the cause of people in this country who are trying to sue the tobacco manufacturers.

Twenty three people, all suffering from lung cancer and aged from their mid-50s to their early 70s, are suing Gallahers and Imperial Tobacco for not warning them of the dangers of smoking when they took it up. They are being represented on a "no-win, no-fee" basis by solicitor Martyn Day, as legal aid has been turned down. The cases are expected to come to court in about 18 months' time.

Mr Day said yesterday: "This admission will help us to prove to the courts in the UK that the firms knew the truth but refused to accept it for public relations

reasons. The UK and US firms have always acted together in issues of health and maintained a unified position - this is the start of the facade cracking. It is now likely that many more people will jump on the bandwagon of taking legal action against them."

The admission by Liggett was also welcomed by the British Medical Association. Ash (Action on Smoking and Health), the Cancer Research Campaign and the British Lung Foundation.

Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "At last the tobacco industry is being forced to come clean about its marketing tactics. Today's young people are being cynically exploited and their future endangered."

Amelia Sandford, a spokeswoman for Ash, said: "After decades of denial and deceit, the tobacco industry is finally being

forced to admit that nicotine is highly addictive and that smoking causes cancer and other diseases."

Dr John Moore-Gillon, chairman of the British Lung Foundation, said: "Liggett's move is likely to be motivated by cynical business calculations rather than a miraculous conversion to decent civilised behaviour. But whatever the reasons, this is a great step forward for people damaged by smoking and for the millions of children not yet hooked on the habit."

And Jean King, head of education at the CRC, said: "This represents a remarkable U-turn by the tobacco industry and vindicates the strong stand that agencies like the CRC have taken for many years now - often in the face of aggressive, almost bully-boy tactics - by cigarette manufacturers."

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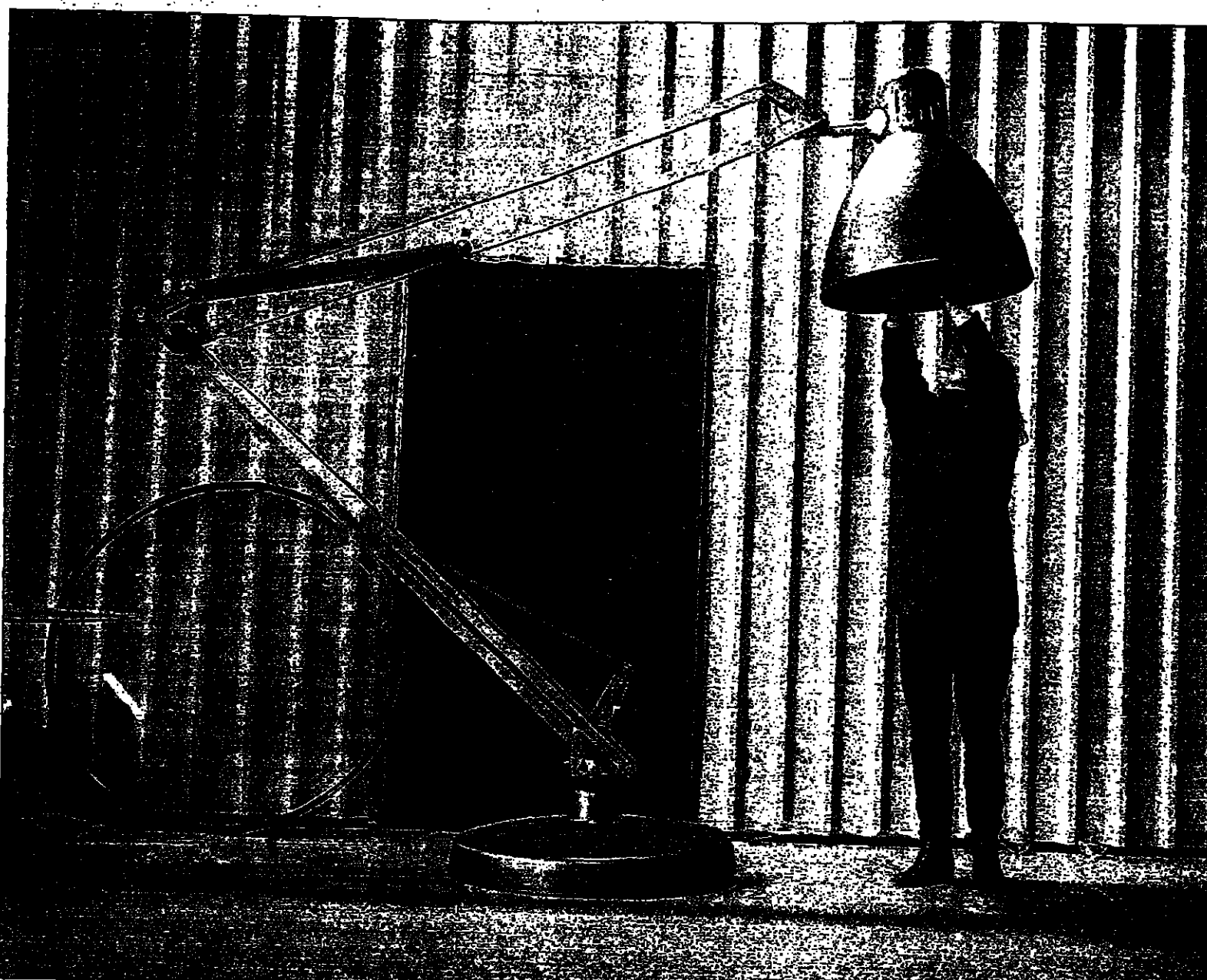
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A furniture expert at Christie's in South Kensington, London, preparing a 'Moloch' lamp for a modern-design sale at the auction house on Wednesday. Designed by Italian artist and film-maker, Gaetano Pesce, the giant lamp is estimated at £8,000 to £8,000. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Legal confusion as coma woman allowed to die

Annabel Ferriman

The medical world was thrown into confusion yesterday when a judge ruled that food and hydration could be withdrawn from a 29-year-old woman, even though doing so would not strictly follow rules laid down by the Royal College of Physicians.

The woman, known as Miss D, was suffering a "living death" and the time had come for "merciful relief," said Sir Stephen Brown, President of the High Court Family Division.

The case breaks new ground because in previous cases where doctors have applied to turn off life-support machines of seriously brain-damaged patients, the victims have been in a "persistent vegetative state" (PVS). Miss D was not considered by experts to be in a PVS because she could track movement with her eyes and responded to cold water being poured into her ears.

James Munby QC, who was appointed to represent the woman's interests, told Sir Stephen that the reason the Royal College had been anxious to identify what he had called a "bright line" over which the boundaries should not be pushed was because there was always a danger of going down

a "slippery slope". But the judge, in his ruling said that all the consultants, doctors, medical team and family were agreed that Miss D had no awareness of her surroundings or herself, and all the evidence was that there was "no possibility of any meaningful life whatsoever". Sir Stephen said that he did not feel he was altering the boundaries of who could be allowed to die. "I am driven to the conclusion... that it is in this patient's best interest to withdraw the artificial feeding and hydration which is keeping her body alive."

But the judgement was condemned by the anti-euthanasia group, Alert, which said the "barbaric practice" of cutting off life support systems to brain-damaged patients should be banned. Dr Peggy Norris, chairwoman of Alert, said: "Withholding food and fluids from a person capable of experiencing thirst had been used as a form of torture."

The British Medical Association took the view, however, that the judgement did not extend the categories of patients from whom nutrition and hydration can be withdrawn. "It is an acknowledgement that it would be ethically acceptable to

consider withdrawal of nutrition and hydration from an individual who has permanently lost his or her sentience and awareness," a spokesman said.

Miss D was at university when she was seriously injured in a road accident in 1989. She recovered enough to walk round in familiar surroundings, but in 1995 was found unconscious in her bed, probably having had an epileptic fit. She has never subsequently recovered consciousness.

This week her feeding tube had become dislodged, and a small operation would have been needed to replace it. Consequently the hospital trust caring for her had applied to the court for a declaration that it was lawful to "discontinue all life sustaining treatment." Its request was upheld.

A spokesman for the Royal College of Physicians said the decision had caused confusion.

"We set up a working group to produce guidelines, in order to help doctors in a difficult situation. But they are only guidelines and the judge is not obliged to follow them. The judgement does not change them, but it seems to be leading to some uncertainty among doctors."

New inquiry into child abuse claims

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Detectives are to launch a fresh inquiry into child abuse allegations following the conviction of the paedophile care-worker Keith Laverack, it was revealed yesterday.

Laverack's case, described by Judge Huw Daniel at Chester Crown Court as the most serious of its kind that he could remember, has been at the heart of a police investigation into more than 500 separate allegations of abuse, which has already seen twelve paedophiles tried and convicted.

Now Cambridgeshire police say they are investigating fresh allegations by former residents of children's homes in the county. Allegations were made against two other social-services staff in Cambridgeshire during the trial. Police say they have also received several telephone calls in the wake of Laverack's conviction.

Laverack, 52, a social services manager with Cambridgeshire County Council, was jailed for 18 years at Chester Crown Court two weeks ago after being convicted of 15 child-abuse charges.

A jury heard that he had abused children in his care during 30 years as a teacher and headmaster at children's homes in Cambridgeshire and Cheshire. He began his paedophile career as soon as he joined the staff of Greystone Heath, an approved school in Warrington, and continued, as he rose to become a senior social services manager, until 1987.

Laverack denied the 20 specimen charges against him. But the jury found him guilty on 11 counts of buggery and four of indecent assault after almost nine hours of deliberation at Chester Crown Court. Many of his victims were in court and broke into applause as he was led away.

As he passed sentence, Judge

Huw Daniel told Laverack: "You were confident you could get away with it because the system allowed you to get away with it, and you ensured the silence of these children by threats and sweet-talk, confident in the knowledge that if these children did complain they would not be believed."

Det Supt Ian Negus said a new team of officers had been set up in Cambridge to investigate allegations "against a number of people". The cases have snowballed since an initial complaint made by a young man who walked into a police station in Cheshire three years ago and have spread to 14 other forces from Scotland to the south of England.

In Cheshire and Merseyside more than 5,000 former children's home residents have been traced and in Cheshire alone 500 complaints of sexual and physical abuse have been made against 111 former care home workers.

Rescuers free Moby for life on high seas

Moby, the giant sperm whale, was last night thought to be heading for the safety of the open seas after a rescue operation off the Scottish coast.

Volunteers succeeded in shepherding the 40-foot mammal eastwards up the Firth of Forth and away from the dangers of the upsurge shallows. Three more sperm whales were seen in the area last night and experts said that if the sightings were confirmed, it could indicate Moby's companions were waiting for him to join them.

By a stroke of fortune, Moby had lost his way in an area close to where experts were on hand at the Deep Sea World sea life aquarium at North Queensferry, Fife.

He had first been sighted in the area on Thursday night, apparently stranded on a sandbank near the Forth rail bridge.

Drivers and animal welfare experts were alerted but the whale was able to move off the sandbank on a changing tide and was at that point thought to be clear of danger.

But yesterday he was spotted further up river and fears rose that he could swim into serious danger if he went into shallow waters.

Volunteers in boats shepherded him in the hope that the noise from the engines would persuade him to head downstream.

Keith Todd, curator of the Deep Sea World centre, said the tactic appeared to be working. "The whale was spotted east of Crangemouth but at the moment he is making very good progress down river," he said.

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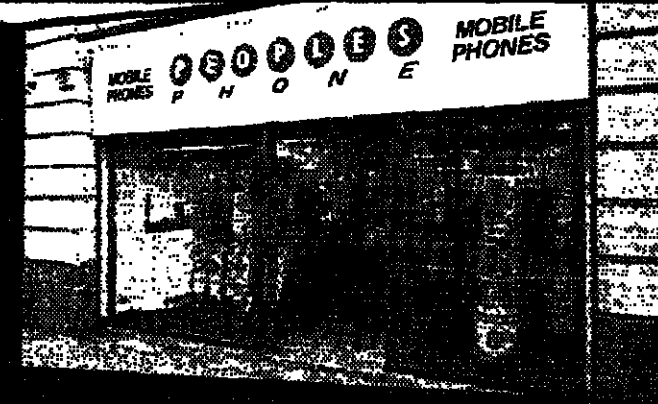


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election countdown

Threat to means-test child benefit is lifted

Colin Brown

The Tory threat to means-test child benefit was lifted yesterday with a pledge to raise it in line with the inflation rate for the next five years.

The proposed Family Benefit Guarantee, costing £1bn, will be the centrepiece of Tory promises on the family in its election manifesto, which was endorsed by the Cabinet on Thursday for release after Easter. It was leaked to deflect attention from the row over alleged Tory sleaze.

The Tories will also pledge for the first time to raise family credit in line with inflation. The decision to inflation-proof child benefit by Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, ends the threat raised during Baroness Thatcher's period of office to means-test it. She was prevented from taxing child benefit or limiting it to those on low incomes by a 1987 election commitment. Mr Lilley reviewed the idea, but decided it was unworkable after the introduction of separate taxation

for men and women. The Tory MP Peter Bottomley led the campaign to protect child benefit from attacks on the grounds that it went to the richest families. Its supporters insisted that keeping it as a universal benefit ensured maximum take-up by those who needed it.

The Tories have also taken a strategic decision that limiting it to families on low incomes would hurt their own core supporters in the middle classes.

Mr Lilley challenged Labour to back the proposals. But the shadow social security secretary, Harriet Harman, publishing new figures on child poverty, said: "The Tories claim that their Family Benefit Guarantee shows they are the party of the family. But this government's record on the family has been disastrous."

She said the number of children being brought up in poverty had more than tripled under the Tories - rising to nearly 4.5 million, about one in three, in families on income support and family credit in 1996 from 1.1 million, or about one in 10, in

families on their predecessor benefits in 1979.

A third of all families had to rely on means-tested benefits when they had a baby, while two-thirds of children living in poverty in Britain were being raised by lone mothers living on about £100 a week. She said the Government had inflicted "a double failure" on such children, by failing to help lone mothers get work and failing to make absent fathers pay.

The Liberal Democrat spokeswoman, Liz Lynne, said: "This has more to do with political posturing than with any firm commitment to help people on benefit." She also criticised Labour for proposing ending scrapping child benefit for children staying on at school after 16 to fund means-tested help with an educational allowance for lower income families. "The Tories should now come clean on their plans for other benefits which are not automatically updated each year by prices, such as Income Support and Disability Working Allowance."



Making a meal of it: Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, doing the rounds with prospective candidate Eleanor Laing at a breakfast meeting held for local business people yesterday in Theydon Bois, Essex. Photograph: Brian Harris

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Pro-European Tories ready to defend Emu

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Pro-Euro Tory MPs are ready to repudiate the Prime Minister, if he rules out Britain's entry into the single European currency in the heat of the election campaign.

John Major is under pressure from Euro-sceptics in the Cabinet to harden the Government's "wait and see" policy on the single currency to steal a march on Labour during the election.

But a 50-strong group of Tory MPs are ready to disown any move by the Prime Minister to ditch that policy in an attempt to outflank Tony Blair. "We would also ask Kenneth Clarke [the Chancellor] to repudiate it," said one of the leaders of the group. Such a move

would destroy any hope of the Tories holding to a united line on the single currency.

The MPs have privately spoken to the Chancellor about the policy. "He is adamant that there will be no change in the policy," said one MP.

A letter signed by more than 50 Tory MPs was handed into the Government shortly before Mr Major called the election, to reinforce their demands for the Government to stick to its agreed policy on Europe during the election.

Some pro-Euro Tory MPs refused to sign the declaration on the grounds that it was not strong enough. They fear that the Prime Minister may be persuaded to rule out a single currency by the number of Tory Euro-sceptics who are prepared to rule it out in their election

addresses. Peter Temple-Morris, leader of the Mackeod group of "one nation" Tory MPs, will make a commitment in his election address to enter a single currency.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, described the single currency as "extraordinarily dangerous" in The Hague this week, raising expectations of a tougher Cabinet policy. Mr Rifkind warned that the issue could divide the European Union for a generation.

Senior ministers believe it could transform the Tories' electoral hopes, and close the gap with Labour before polling day, if Mr Major campaigned on the theme of "saving the pound", with the threat that Labour would negotiate it away.

However, senior Labour sources said Mr Blair would fol-

low Mr Major in hardening the policy on the single currency. The Labour leader says in the *New Statesman* there are "a lot of formidable obstacles" to monetary union.

Bundesbank leaders have intensified the pressure on the Government from the Euro-sceptics to rule out the single currency by making it clear the convergence criteria will be "fudged", by refusing to accept the treaty obligations to reduce public debt in Germany to below three per cent of its Gross Domestic Product.

The Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary reached an uneasy compromise that Britain was "hostile to a fudge" after Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, insisted that the Government was against the single currency.

Abortion fails the political test

John Rentoul

Our poll gave voters a choice of two statements: 76 per cent agreed that: "Abortion is a moral issue and should be kept right out of politics." Only 14 per cent opted for the alternative: "Abortion is a political as well as a moral issue and the political parties should make it clear whether they are pro- or anti-abortion." The remaining 9 per cent did not know, according to this week's *Independent/Harris* poll.

The findings suggest the electorate has no truck with Thomas Winning, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, who has attacked Tony Blair over his support for the present abortion law. The Pro-Life Alliance also looks doomed in its bid to stand 50 candidates on a policy of absolute opposition to abortion.

A spokesman for Cardinal Winning said: "Was it politicians

who legalised abortion or wasn't it? We have seen 4.25m abortions take place overwhelmingly for social reasons as a result of a political decision."

Mr Blair, the Labour leader, has said he personally is opposed to abortion but that he does not believe he should legislate to force women to have unwanted children. The Labour Party leaves the issue to the conscience of individual MPs.

Bruno Quintavalle, director of the Pro-Life Alliance, said: "This shows the need for our campaign to change attitudes. Abortion is the most political of all issues because it is about the value of human life."

Other poll evidence has shown a trend over the past two decades towards more liberal views on abortion, with a clear majority agreeing that women should have the right to choose. Harris Research interviewed 1,016 adults in their homes between 14 and 17 March.

significant shorts

Bernie Grant's foe faces deselection

The prospective Conservative candidate standing against Bernie Grant is about to be deselected. Derek Laud, 53, is accused by the party at his constituency of Tottenham, North London, of almost total failure to meet voters. He refused to meet the press for a photo-call and sent a picture of himself with John Major instead. He also told the local party he would be out of the country on 31 March, the date chosen by his constituency for the adoption meeting. Now four of his 10 legally required nominees are thinking of standing down; the party is expected to reopen the candidates' list.

Kirti Sengupta

Churchill writes off politics

Winston Churchill, MP for Davyhulme, Manchester, who lost out in boundary changes and has since failed to be selected in five other constituencies, said he intended to return to a career in journalism.

Labour dogged

A Labour campaigner had part of her finger bitten off by a dog as she pushed a leaflet through a letterbox in Stourbridge, West Midlands. The dog's owner packed the finger in ice but doctors could not sew her finger back on because they were concerned about infection.

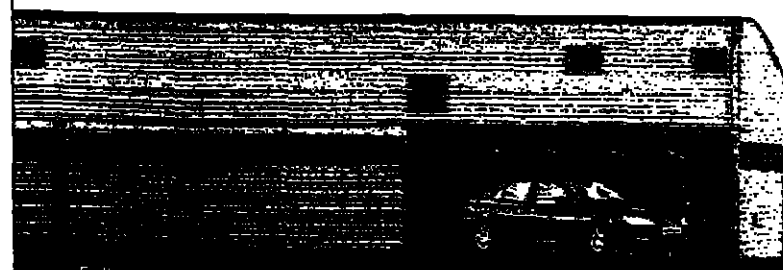
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election countdown

Sleaze derails Conservative campaign

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Tory election strategy was blown off course yesterday by the row over sleaze. Infuriating John Major and close Cabinet colleagues over the way their attempt to seize the initiative in the campaign had been wrecked. Tory election planners had set the focus on "British excellence" as the theme of the first week of campaigning but it ended with the focus firmly on allegations of Tory sleaze.

Mr Major and his wife Norma toured Gatwick airport yesterday in an attempt to highlight the success of the Tory privatisation programme, with British Airways and the Gatwick Express rail service. But they could not escape questions about alleged "Tory sleaze".

While the Majors may have felt like joining the holidaymakers jetting away from the elections to the sun, Labour Party advisers said the Tories have wasted the first week of the campaign by becoming mired in the sleaze row, and will be forced this weekend to rethink their strategy.

"Sleaze is playing well out in the country," said one source close to John Prescott, the deputy leader, who is on a campaign tour of Britain. "We are getting voters saying they will switch because of Tory sleaze."

Another week of sleaze allegations could leave the Tories too much ground to make up by polling day on 1 May, with the prospects of Labour's lead in the polls turning into a rout, and a landslide for Tony Blair. That fear could lead the Tory campaign strategists to escalate their attacks on Labour next week. Labour

may also refocus their own campaign to keep the Tories on the run this weekend. "We might go for the 'honest John' image," said a Labour source. "Maybe John Major in a sheepskin coat."

The deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, was so angry with the accusations this week that he stormed into Downing Street and confronted startled cameramen outside Number 10 with furious denials. However, his angry protests were in vain. The television camera had broken down and there were no reporters in Downing Street to report his outburst.

Mr Major's campaign began brightly with the Prime Minister on his soap box in Luton, but the Tory campaign organisers were privately criticised for their failure to spot potential photo-opportunity pitfalls as Mr Major was required to pose next to a racing car with no wheels, and, during a tour of a minor public school, a boy dangling from a tree. He is learning fast, however. Mr Major avoided being caught by the photographers by a cadet giving

Trail that leads from two men's battle

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

It started in Mohamed al-Fayed's sumptuous office in Harrods and by last night was stalling the start of the Conservative offensive in the election campaign.

The battle between Mr Fayed and Lorrho's Tiny Rowland for the Knightsbridge store led to lobbyist Ian Greer dispensing money to some 40 MPs and candidates, mainly Tory, as Mr Fayed sought political support in the Commons.

Flush with Mr Fayed's cash, Mr Greer paid for questions to be asked in Parliament, and meetings to be arranged with ministers.

Sir Michael Gyles, the Tory MP with whom he had a long-standing relationship received at least £86,000 in payments from Mr Greer. Other Tory MPs

ply that there is any substance to the allegations against them. They are: Sir Peter Hordern, who is standing down, Lady Olga Maitland, Norman Lamont, Gerry Malone and Nij Deva.

Mr Fayed also wanted to be a British citizen, but was being blocked. He couldn't understand why all the money he had paid out had not reaped any benefits. Back home in Egypt, he would have got anything done for that kind of money. Eventually, he began to tell his tales to journalists.

In September 1994, he summoned Brian Hitchen, editor of the *Sunday Express* to his office and told him the tales of cash for questions and other allegations against MPs. He specifically named Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith.

Mr Hitchen alerted John Major to the allegations, and the Prime Minister set up an inquiry headed by Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary.

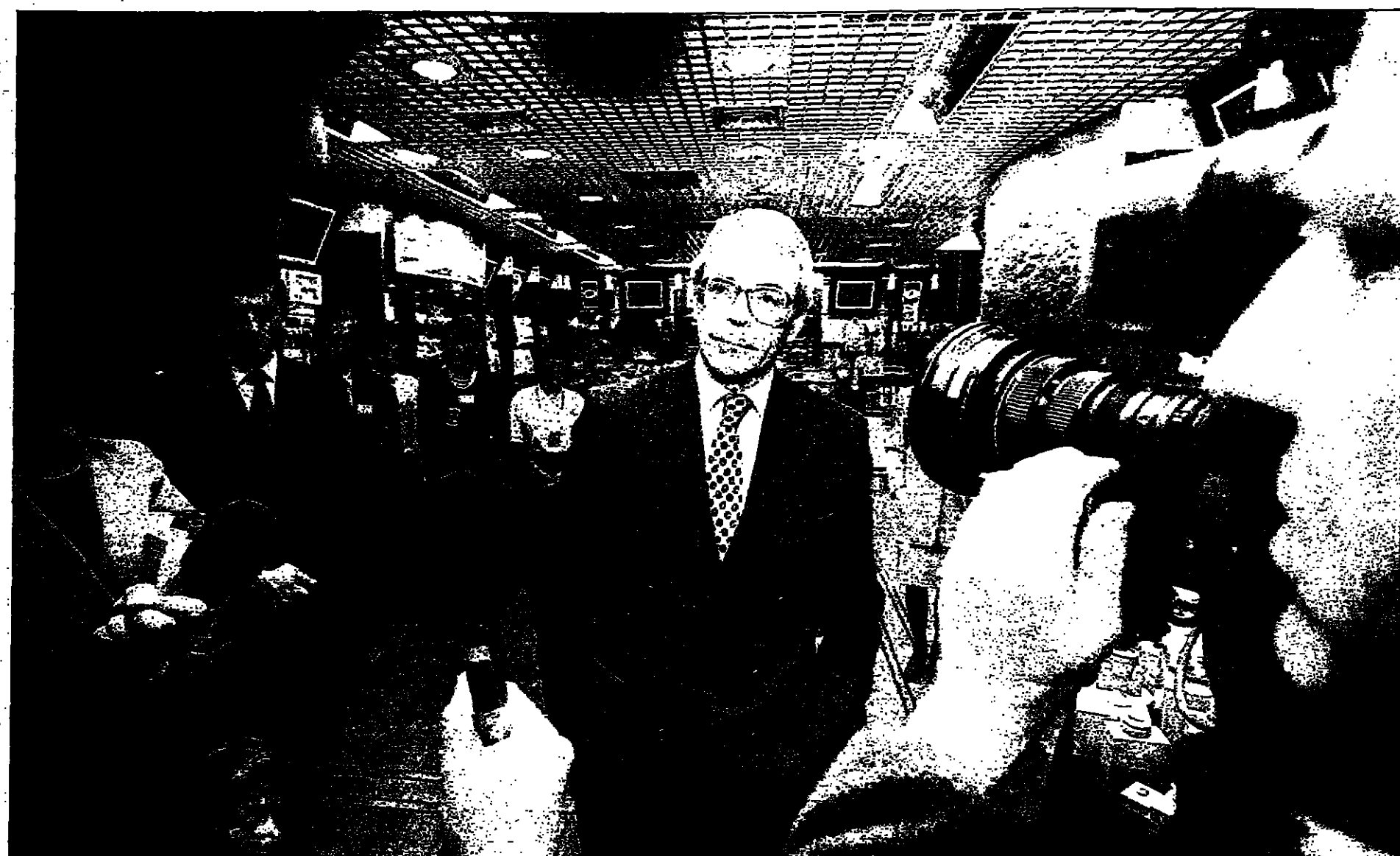
While many of Mr Fayed's allegations may have proved unfounded, his scattergun approach hit a few targets and led to the libel case which was to expose the murky relationship between MPs and lobbyists to the public gaze.

Five days before Sir Robin Butler's inquiry was published, towards the end of October the *Guardian* ran a story about cash for questions involving Mr Smith and Mr Hamilton. Mr Smith held up his hands and went quickly, but Mr Hamilton demurred, and only eventually resigned because, according to Mr Major, there were other allegations to be investigated.

Mr Hamilton and Mr Greer launched a libel campaign against the *Guardian* that was to prove their undoing. Days before it was due to reach court in October 1996, first Mr Greer, then Mr Hamilton pulled out.

The focus turned to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, whose post had been created as a result of the Nolan Committee, itself set up as a result of Mr Fayed's allegations. Sir Gordon began an inquiry which he was to have presented to the Standards and Privileges Committee, another Nolan innovation which had taken over from the old Members' Interest Committee and combined with the Privileges Committee.

Sir Gordon smashed another set of documents and was expected to present his findings to the committee next Tuesday. But the unexplained 19-day gap between the prorogation (the suspension of activity) and the dissolution of Parliament on 8 April meant that the committee had no chance to deliberate on it before the election.



Passenger announcements: John Major answering questions during a campaign visit yesterday to Gatwick airport

Photograph: Peter Macdiamid

Combative Smith vows to defend true-blue territory

Michael Streeter

Former Tory minister Tim Smith promised yesterday to "keep on fighting" after more disclosures about the money he took from Mohamed al-Fayed.

Speaking at his constituency home in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, Mr Smith responded to charges in the *Guardian* that he had taken between £18,000 and £25,000 from the Harrods owner, saying: "I have written to the Speaker about what I believe to be a contempt of Parliament and a fundamental abuse of the rights of natural justice."

He added that he now thought it would have been better if Sir Gordon Downey's report had been published in full rather than the publication of stories which were full of inaccuracies and based on "totally unacceptable" leaks.

Responding to allegations that the Government knew about his receipt of cash before he became a Northern Ireland minister, Mr Smith said he had told the then Chief Whip David Waddington in February 1989 of the payments. Pressed on whether this information was or should have been passed on to John Major when he became a minister he replied: "The Prime Minister in 1989 was not John Major. I have no reason to think that he was aware of this. That is why I take strong exception to the way the *Guardian* has portrayed it."

The MP said he would be defending his majority of nearly 24,000 - the third safest Tory

street in the country - on both national and local issues. "I'm going to fight on," he said.

Earlier Mr Smith had handed out prizes at the local Iver Heath primary school to pupils for good behaviour and improvement in performance. Last night, he faced a potentially rougher ride at the coincidental annual general meeting of the Conservative Association in nearby Gerrard's Cross.

Malcolm Dunlop, vice-chairman of the Beaconsfield town branch of the association, said he expected the fresh allegations to be raised at the meeting. "I will be surprised if someone did not raise it, it's topical." But he added that he was unaware of any new move to de-select the MP, who has served as a mem-

ber since 1982, as the allegations contain "nothing new" from November 1995 when the association "overwhelmingly" voted to keep him.

Other sources suggested, however, that two-fifths of the association had not wanted him to continue then.

Mr Dunlop conceded: "Had there been new allegations there would have been considerable concern. But [at the 1995 meeting] he seems to have been extraordinarily open and frank about the payments."

Last night, Labour said they were angry that while Mr Smith might have told his association that he had received at least £18,000 from Mr Fayed, his constituents had not been made aware of it and had only been

told of the earlier figures of between £2,000 and £6,000.

The Labour candidate, Alastair Hudson, said that at a head-to-head public meeting with Mr Smith last November, the MP had been challenged on the issue but had made no attempt to update the electorate on the true figures involved.

A Tory voter who asked not to be named said she was "very disappointed" that the affair had resurfaced. But she added: "We gave him another chance last time - I suppose we'll give him another chance now."

Pensioner Ernest Leslie, a rare Labour voter, said: "It won't make much difference: the Tories will still win here. If you put a blue rosette on a donkey they'd vote for it."

Hamilton finds friends among the faithful

Ros Wynne-Jones

The bowling green behind the Tatton Conservative Association in Knutsford was empty yesterday, the office doors battered against the slings and arrows of angry constituents and waiting journalists.

But last night, below ground in a bunker-like meeting room, the party faithful were rallying round Neil Hamilton.

The Cheshire MP was in fighting form - veering between a barrage of humorous insults against his tormentors. The *Guardian* and Mohamed al-Fayed, and a robust defence of his personal integrity.

"I never took any money from Mr Al Fayed and that comes out unambiguously in the inquiry," he said quietly. But the shaking of his hands as he pointed to highlighted paragraphs of the disputed transcript belied the conviction in his voice.

Mr Hamilton said the "cornerstone" of the allegations made against him two and a half years ago at the outset of the "cash-for-questions saga" as he refers to it, had been disproved the day before in the Standards Committee report which exonerated 15 high-profile ministers from accepting money from Mr Fayed. "This is exactly the same money that Mr Greer [the lobbyist Ian Greer] was supposed to have given to me," he said. "He can't have given it to us both. One of the reasons I

suggest that they print the full transcript of the evidence of Mr Al Fayed, a full transcript of which I've got here, is that it will reveal the allegations are made up."

Mr Hamilton denied he was at any risk of deselection at the constituency's annual meeting last night, and he had a message for disloyal constituents.

"There are people in this country who believe that because something appears in a newspaper in this country it must be true. My experience in the past two years is precisely the reverse."

"I would just say to those who privately think it would be better for me to stand down... what has happened to one of the cardinal principles of this country, that a man is innocent until proven guilty?"

The curly signs last night were that Mr Hamilton would weather the deselection crisis ahead.

A local party insider said: "Frankly, we have considered getting rid of Neil and we could easily do so without affecting our chances of winning the seat."

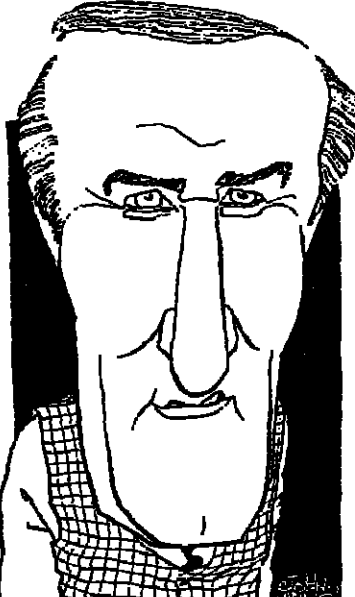
"We could put almost anyone up... it's a standing joke in Tatton that we could put up a monkey in a blue jacket in these parts and still win. The point is that we don't want to - we'd rather have Neil. We've watched him being crucified over the last two years and, to be honest, most of us feel sorry for the man."



Sitting tight: Tim Smith in Beaconsfield yesterday

Photograph: John Lawrence

PLAY FANTASY POLITICS.



ANDREW NEIL. HEAD OF PRIME MINISTER BLAIR'S POLICY UNIT.

New Statesman? WHAT'S GOING ON?

CONTRIBUTORS THIS WEEK: BRIAN ENO, FAY WELDON, WILL SELF, IAN JACK, DEE WILSON, JOHN LLOYD, JOHN KEMPHYS, MARY RIDDELL, SIMON HOFFER. £1.99 OUT NOW.



A security guard standing next to a Van Gogh watercolour, Harvest in Provence, which will be auctioned at Sotheby's in June Photograph: Reuters

Bank of England gold 'was looted' in Holocaust

Jan Burrell

Millions of pounds' worth of Nazi gold held in the vaults of the Bank of England was looted from Holocaust victims, according to a report published yesterday.

The Holocaust Educational Trust said its report contained new evidence which showed that the gold should be returned to the survivors and their families. Some of the gold bars included metal from items like gold teeth and jewellery which the Nazis had stripped from Jews.

The report, which is based on a detailed study of British government and Nazi archives, said the Bank of England gold should not be given to the gov-

ernments of countries who are claiming reparation for Second World War losses inflicted by Germany.

Five-and-a-half tons of gold - worth £39m - is being held in America and Britain awaiting distribution to victims of the war.

The trust researchers examined the methods of the Tine Gold Commission (TGC) which was set up in 1947 by Britain, France and the US to organise the restoration of "monetary gold" to the 10 countries which are claiming losses. Monetary gold was looted by Germany from the treasuries of countries it had invaded.

The trust researchers found that much of the gold in this pool was in fact looted from private individuals and companies. The TGC was supposed to pass such "non-monetary" gold to the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees.

The researchers found that officials who helped to manage the Nazi treasure were beset by a "considerable degree of confusion and doubt about the provenance of certain gold bars".

One American government document refers to a "question mark" against a shipment of 8,307 gold bars.

It notes: "These gold bars may, after proper assay and expert consideration, be determined to represent melted-down gold teeth fillings and therefore classifiable as non-monetary gold."

In July 1948, a number of bags containing medals, plaques and tokens arrived at the Bank of England.

Bank officials concluded that they could never have been currency but recommended they be melted down and "turned into good delivery bars".

The trust report said: "If this occurred, this is evidence of individual possessions being ultimately returned to national treasuries."

The report, which was announced by the trust's chairman,

Labour MP Greville Janner, said that governments did not intend to deprive the refugees of what was rightfully theirs, but "amid the chaos" of post-war reconstruction, errors were made.

"As a result, some of the people who had lost most as a result of Nazi brutality were denied a proportion of the restitution owed to them," it said.

The report states that even if all the remaining pooled gold were reallocated to individual victims, it was still likely to be less than they should have received under the 1945 Paris Treaty on the distribution of gold looted by Germany and recovered by the Allies.

Last month, after pressure from campaigners, Britain and America agreed to freeze distribution of what was left in the gold pool - some 1.5 per cent of the original amount.

Both countries have been conducting research to establish its origin.

Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told Greville Janner earlier this month that it was impossible to ascertain what went into the TGC gold pool.

He was sympathetic to the idea that individuals should benefit, and he promised no decisions would be made until research was complete.

The trust believes that the gold should be divided between the World Jewish Restitution Organisation, and a similar non-Jewish organisation which would help the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis.

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These gold bars may ... represent melted gold teeth fillings

Numbers of police in decline

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

The number of police officers in England and Wales has fallen in the past year by 321 despite Government pledges to increase the total, the Home Office revealed yesterday.

It was also disclosed that the number of Specials - part-time volunteer police officers - has declined by 204 in 1995, at a time when the Government had spent £4m in an attempt to recruit a further 10,000.

Labour will seize on this information as useful ammunition in the run-up to the election in which law and order is one of the key issues. The Tories pledged an extra 1,000 full-time officers in their 1992 election manifesto and John Major promised in 1995 to provide 5,000 extra officers in the next three years.

But figures released yesterday in the Home Office's Annual Report 1997, which gives their spending plans for up to the end of the century, show a drop of 321 in the past 12 months to 126,901.

The report said that in 1995-96 police strengths had expected to rise by 900 officers, but had only gone up by 544 constables. However, this was offset by a reduction in 865 higher-ranking officers as part of the cuts taking place in the management structure. The report predicts that extra money in the next three years "will enable chief constables to increase police numbers by 5,000".

In 1992, when the pledge of an extra 1,000 officers was made the total was 127,627 - more than 700 less than the current total. Police chiefs have continued to show a marked reluctance to spend extra resources on officers, choosing instead to use it on new developments, such as DNA testing, CS sprays, or for paying the spiralling costs of pension contributions.

The report points out that with the drop in higher ranking officers and civilianisation of many administrative jobs the number of constables has increased by nearly 2,000 since 1992.

In a separate development David Maclean, the Home Office minister, revealed that despite spending £4m on a recruitment drive to attract another 10,000 Special constables to swell the existing 20,000, the total had dropped by 204. The Government is set to spend another £5.3m in recruitment.

The Home Office yesterday argued that it was being successful in recruiting new volunteers, but existing Specials were dropping out at the same rate. Alun Michael, Labour's Home Affairs spokesman, said: "This demonstrates yet again the fact that John Major and Michael Howard have broken their promise. Far from delivering the 1,000 extra officers promised in 1992 they are delivering a fall which totally undermines any promises to provide extra officers in the future."

Paul Broughton, chairman of the Police Federation, which represents constables to chief inspector ranks, added: "While Specials are resigning almost as fast as they are being enlisted it is throwing money down the drain."

An extra £450m will be needed in the next three years to pay for the cost of the spiralling prison population and raft of new law and order measures being introduced.

The Home Office has been forced to revise its budget plans for the rest of the century after tough new sentencing provisions, backed by a growing emphasis on jailing offenders, has derailed earlier predictions. The forecast for the Home Office for this coming financial year is £6.605m, compared with earlier predictions of £6.504m. The extra money is needed to cope with the jail population which will top the historic 60,000 mark in the next few weeks and for extra prison security. The Treasury has already agreed to give the Home Office an extra £230m this year to help with the prison crisis.

The Home Office's Annual Report 1997, available from the Stationery Office, 49 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6HF, £20.50.

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Three's company: Simon Callow in *The Importance of Being Oscar* (left), Stephen Fry, who portrays the playwright in the forthcoming film, and (above) Wilde himself

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news

Assisted places at risk after scheme frozen

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Hundreds of new assisted places in private preparatory schools could be thrown into jeopardy because of a civil service freeze on processing them during the election period, independent schools warned yesterday.

The fate of more than 600 places for bright children from low-income families in 118 prep schools joining the scheme this year will be uncertain under a Labour government, even though the party has agreed to honour places already offered if it wins power, the schools said.

Some said they were now unlikely to wait for an end to the confusion and would offer the places to paying families instead.

The difficulty rests on the fact that prep schools new to the assisted places scheme have been forbidden to make any firm offers of places until they receive signed "participation agreements" from the Department for Education and Employment.

The deadline for providing the department with information for the agreements fell yesterday, by which time all processing of the scheme had been

suspended for the duration of the election campaign.

Schools will now have to wait until after 1 May to make formal offers of places. They will also have to wait to see whether, if Labour wins, the new government will honour the offers.

Moves to extend the assisted places scheme were included in the Education Bill, which was rushed through Parliament last week to beat the election deadline.

In a series of deals between the parties over clauses in the Bill, Labour said children who had accepted offers by 1 May would be allowed to take up their assisted places if it took power, though it remains committed to phasing out the scheme and using the money saved to cut class sizes.

Private prep schools which have been allocated assisted places yesterday confirmed they had been told not to fill them without the formal agreement.

Andrew Corbett, headmaster of Kings College School, Cambridge, predicted a new Labour government might argue that the school could not offer its allocated five places.

He said: "Having publicly announced it was awarding these places, it now looks as if

the DFE are going to turn round and say they are not. Parents have had their hopes built up, and we have to turn round and say no, unfortunately we can't offer them."

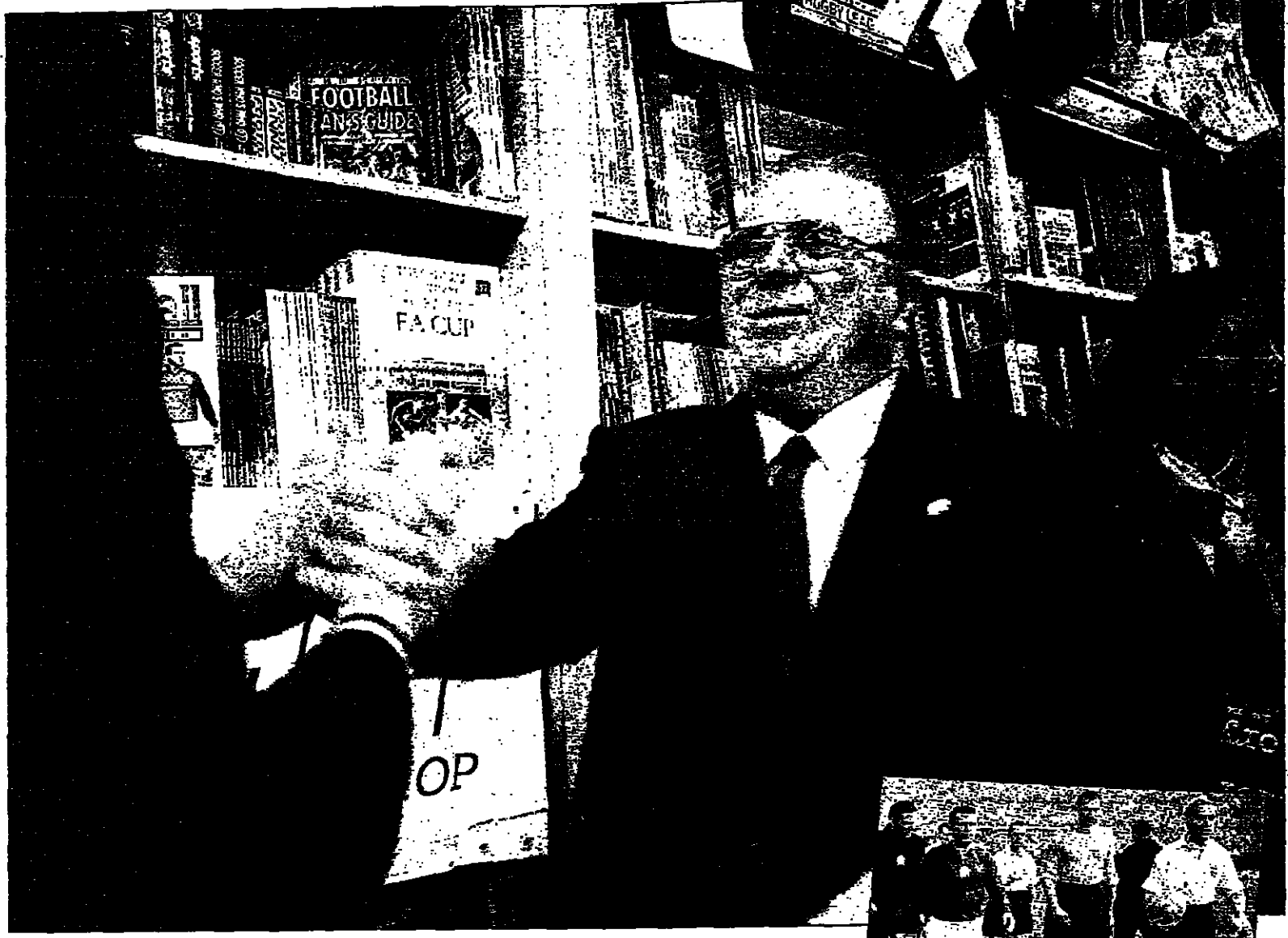
George Marsh, headmaster of Dulwich College Preparatory School in south London, said May was likely to be too late to fill places for many schools, forcing them to give up their allocated assisted places.

Labour yesterday confirmed "any places allocated to a specific individual children" by election day would be honoured.

A party spokesman said the situation would be reviewed in the light of the freeze on agreements, but blamed government incompetence in pushing through the bill for creating the problem.

The spokesman added: "They did not have the necessary commitment behind what they apparently regard as flagship proposals."

A spokeswoman for the education department said that all processing of participation agreements had been stopped until after the election in line with guidelines on dealing with long-term commitments during an election period.



Rolling back the years: Ferenc Puskas, captain of the legendary Hungary football team that destroyed England 6-3 at Wembley in 1953, shaking the hand of veteran commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme at the launch of his new book *Puskas on Puskas* in London yesterday. The inset photograph shows Puskas -

nicknamed the Galloping Major - and the England captain Billy Wright leading out the teams before the match in which England suffered their first home defeat by a foreign side, and were outplayed so comprehensively that the aura of English invincibility was shattered for ever.

Main photograph: Kelpesh Lathiga

Nazi invasion plans - a snip at £1,050

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

German manuals for the planned invasion of Britain in September 1940 fetched £1,050 - twice the expected price - at a Norfolk auction yesterday.

The manuals, found by Pat Grehan, a former Royal Engineers surveyor, form part of a series of documents more than a foot thick, including volumes of maps, town plans, photographs and complete volumes of text, published in Berlin in 1940 to 1941.

The Germans planned their operation, codenamed "Sea Lion", with typical and terrifying thoroughness. The initial landings were to be along the south-east coast. But during the Battle of Britain the Germans failed to achieve the air supremacy they needed for a successful invasion, and they also lost the war at sea. Hitler's attention then turned away eastwards, towards the Soviet Union, and Sea Lion was postponed - forever.

Mr Grehan had found the intelligence documents in 1945 when he was working at a map depot outside Brussels. After more than 50 years, he decided to sell - and was delighted with the result. "There were literally thousands published", he said yesterday. "You wouldn't think they'd be that scarce". Both Mr Grehan and the auctioneers, GA Key of Aylsham, Norfolk, were surprised by the degree of interest.

The exhaustive survey of invasion objectives in Britain went to a bidder who wanted to remain anonymous. The Imperial War Museum said they already had copies, and seemed surprised at how much the lot had fetched.

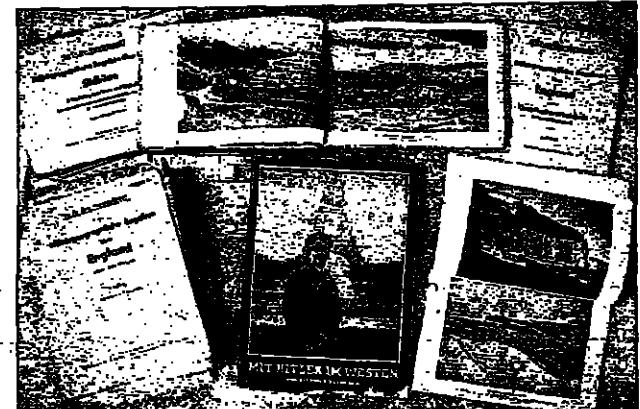
The manuals, in green-card covers, are titled *Militär-geographische Angaben über England* - "Military-Geographical details of Britain" - and marked "Official Use Only". The text is in normal type, and not in the obscure gothic type the Germans often used at that time.

"There is a complete coastal profile which the Zeppelins did in 1938", said Andrew Bullock, the auctioneer. The giant airships, able to loiter for hours at a time, which ceased commercial operations after the Hindenburg airship disaster in 1937, were used for surveillance of the British coast. Even children took part in the survey, from the ground. "The Hitler Youth were encouraged to come over here on holiday with their cameras and sketchbooks", he said.

"[The Germans] weren't just going to land by sea," he added. "There were paratroops as well. Whatever area of Britain they were in they would have the requisite handbook."

"You could naively look at the manuals and say 'what on earth would they need to know that for?'. In one of the booklets it lists all the hospitals in the country with their capacity. A bit ominous."

Mr Grehan believed he had, as a boy, actually seen the Zepp-



Spy-books: German maps of Britain and fact-files which were prepared for the invasion. Photograph: Simon Hadley

ppelin - hovering three or four miles offshore - that took the continuous photograph of the coast from Margate to Weymouth. He encountered the results of the meticulous work after the Allies had landed in Normandy. Mr Grehan said

his depot received more than two tons of maps a night for distribution to Allied troops. Then a big shipment of captured German maps and manuals came in. "We were ordered to ship back about 200 sets", he said. "The rest were taken as souvenirs".

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Three cleared of sectarian murder

Three men were cleared yesterday at the Court of Appeal in Belfast of the sectarian murder of a Catholic mother found with her throat cut in the city. But they were all sentenced for their part in assisting the men who seized and then strangled the woman before dumping her body on waste ground.



Anne Marie Smyth: Taken from club and strangled

Ann Marie Smyth, 25, from Armagh city, was abducted from a club in east Belfast, taken to a house and killed.

The murder in February 1992, horrified Northern Ireland and five men were later jailed for at least 20 years.

At the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal three of them had their murder convictions quashed after the court accepted there was a "looming doubt" about their guilt. Lord Justice MacDermott found each of them guilty of assisting the offenders – one for helping to dispose of the body, another for destroying a quilt and a third for removing incriminating evidence. Stephen Manners, 33, of Woodstock House, Belfast, was sentenced to 10 years. David Magee, 26, of Pearl Street, and Philip Murray, 30, of Kingswood Street, both Belfast, each got eight years. With "remission" following their time in prison since the

murder, the latter two are expected to be freed imminently and Manners some time later. After the hearing Ms Smyth's father, Frank, said: "I've been sentenced to life. To put it mildly I am very disappointed with the judgment."

Two other men failed in their appeals against murder convictions – Carlo John Bingham, 25, of Carreen Drive, Rathcoole, Newtownabbey, and Samuel Cooke, 29, of Cregagh Street.

Ms Smyth was lured from a football supporters' club after it was discovered she was a Catholic in a Protestant area. She was taken to a house and strangled. Her body was dumped on waste ground and the trial of the five men was told her throat was then cut.

The appeal last November centred on the credibility of the chief prosecution witness, Cheryl Kelly, 21, who was in the house at the time of the murder. The Court of Appeal was told that Ms Kelly stole a bottle of vodka while in England under the care of an Royal Ulster Constabulary witness-protection unit. That happened shortly before the trial, when she denied committing any offence since Ms Smyth's murder.

Mr Smyth said he was disgusted by the ruling to clear the three of murder and appalled by what he described as the leniency of the sentences. He now looks after his daughter's children, Kevin, 11, and Emma, aged nine.

"How do you try and explain this to two children? What do you tell them?"

"I have to pick up the pieces and carry on with my life, but I can't believe there can be such a light sentence for an offence of assisting in crime. You get more for shoplifting."

"The men who did this are cowards and they'll live like cowards for the rest of their lives. I'm just stunned."



Knowing Him: Phil Spector leaving the High Court yesterday after his copyright battle (Photograph Mark St George). Above: the pop legend (left) with members of the Teddy Bears



Spector wins back rights to Fifties classic

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

A High Court judge equated a classic Fifties song to a piece of land yesterday when the American pop legend, Phil Spector, won back the United Kingdom copyright to his first hit, "To Know Him is to Love Him", in a case that illustrated the continuing value of the songs that accompanied the adolescence of today's fifty-somethings.

The schmaltzy favourite of a thousand karaoke bars, better known as To Know, Know, Him, has been the source of a wrangle over unpaid royalties between Spector's US-based company, Mother Bertha Music Inc, and UK-based Bourne Music Ltd. Mr Justice Ferris ruled that Bourne Music had no rights to the copyright after December 1986.

Mr Spector claimed an initial 28-year copyright assignment under United States law, made in 1958, in which rights to the song were transferred to music publishers Warman Music – and a licence was then granted to Bourne – had expired in 1986. Bourne claimed that it was still entitled to the rights even though, since 1987, it had not

paid any royalties in respect of them. An inquiry into those profits due to Mr Spector, estimated to run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, will now take place.

In an illuminating aside about the true nature of classic songs the judge said: "When that 28-year term expired the copyright 'reverted' to Mr Spec-

tor in the same way that one speaks of land 'reverting' to a freeholder on the expiration of a lease." A further hearing will take place in May to decide who owns the copyright in jurisdictions outside the UK.

Now 57, Mr Spector wrote the song in 1958 for the Teddy Bears, a band comprising himself and two high school friends.

who took it first to the top of the US charts and then around the world. From that first hit he went on to create his trademark "wall of sound" for a series of soul bands in the Fifties and early Sixties, like The Crystals and The Ronettes who sang the hit "Da Do Ron Ron".

He reached his peak in the mid-Sixties, producing classics

like "River Deep – Mountain High", with Ike and Tina Turner, and The Righteous Brothers' "You've Lost That Loving Feeling", before announcing his retirement at the age of 25.

Since his peak Mr Spector, who cultivated the image of a reclusive svengali, has kept a low profile. He produced the Beatles' *Let It Be* album in the late

Sixties – for which was criticised by Sir Paul McCartney for the scaring violins on "The Long and Winding Road". In the Seventies he produced several John Lennon and Leonard Cohen albums, but has managed to live sumptuously in Los Angeles for 20 years on the royalties from his early works. Which explains the importance of the court case.

5,000 new jobs for BA

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

British Airways yesterday launched a drive to recruit 5,000 "frontline" staff following a decision to shed a similar number of "backroom boys".

As part of a plan to concentrate on the "core" business, two-thirds of the new recruits will be pilots, cabin crew and customer services staff.

Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, denied allegations that he was trying to create a "virtual airline" and said the company envisaged employing more peo-

ple at the turn of the century than it does today.

Union representatives point out, however, that many of the newcomers will be paid less than those being made redundant and that it is all part of a plan to cut costs by £1bn.

Mr Ayling said the industry was becoming increasingly competitive and BA needed to respond to cultural differences, values and tastes and ensure that employees could respond effectively to customers.

"This recruitment drive is a demonstration that our change programme is not just a cost-

cutting exercise, but a positive story about investment in people, new aircraft and services," he said.

George Ryde, national official for the airline industry at the Transport and General Workers' Union, said the company wanted to introduce "new starter" rates for recruits which would be substantially lower than the wages earned by those already at the airline.

BA employs 55,000 people – 45,700 in the United Kingdom – and is in the process of moving many of its services to Gatwick from Heathrow.

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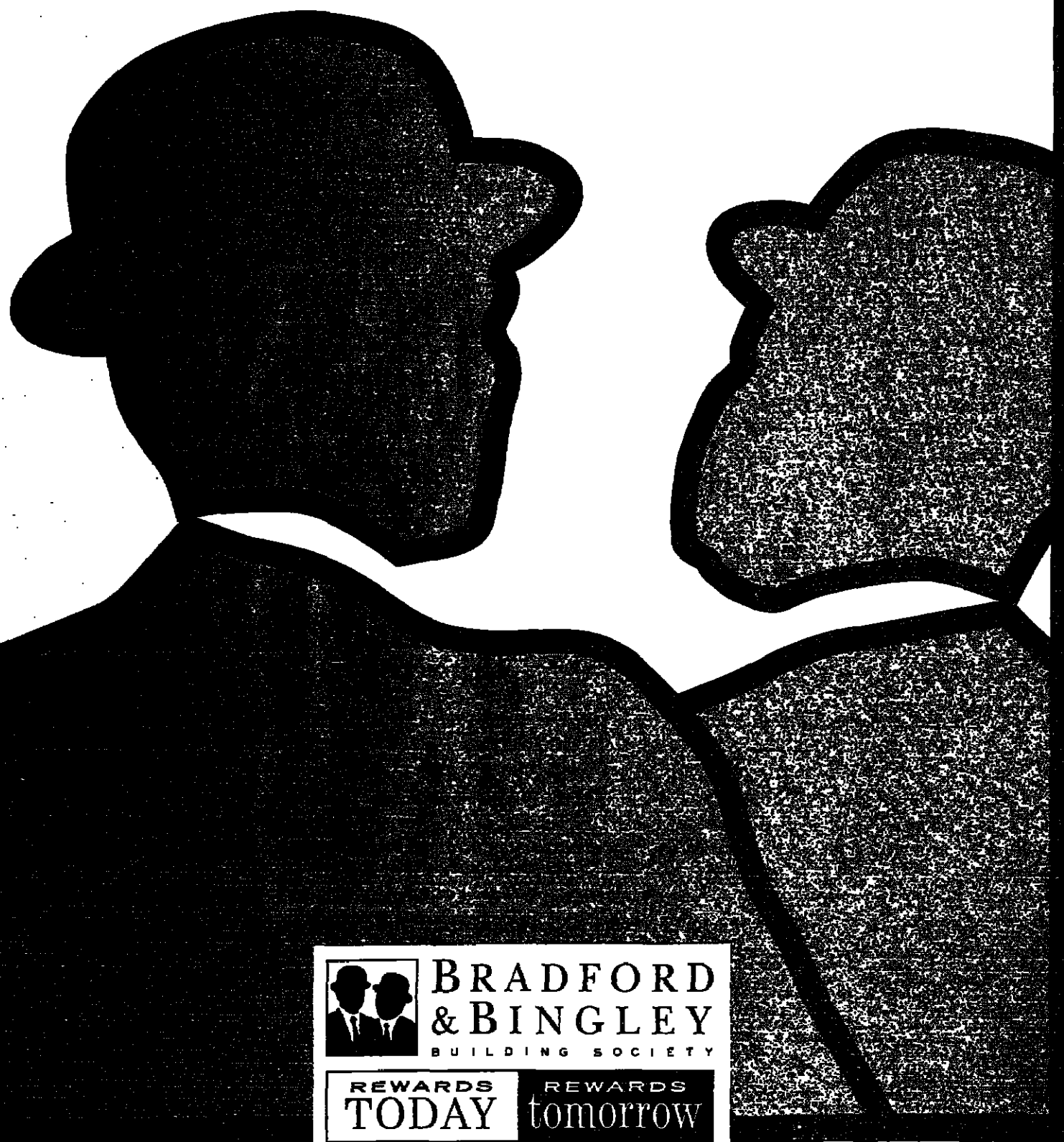
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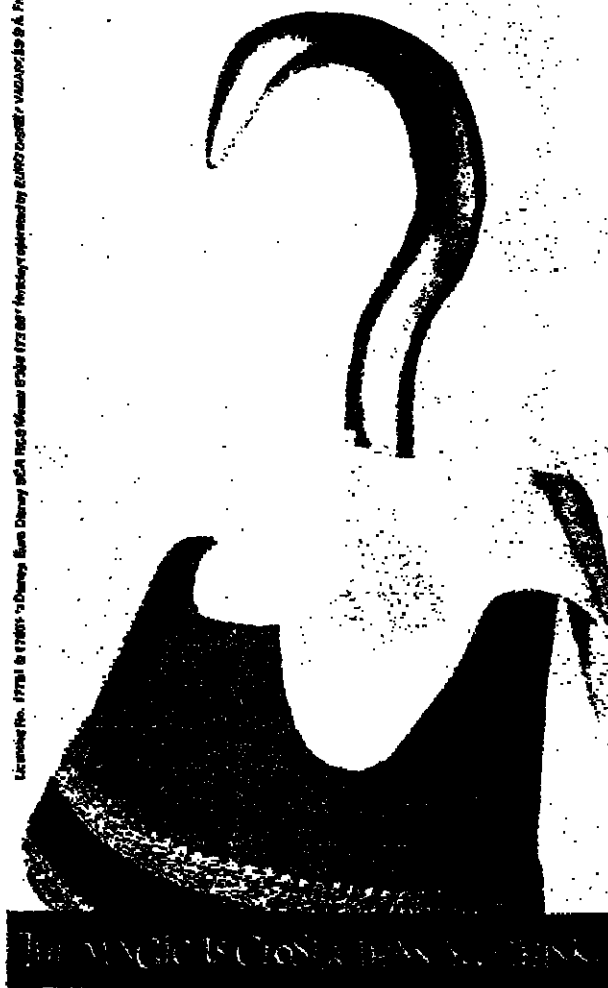
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GUESS
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HAVING
THE
BIGGEST
PARTY
OF
THE
YEAR



Holy warrior: Osama Bin Laden in his heavily-guarded Afghan mountain camp this week Photograph: Robert Fisk

Robert Fisk

The journey to meet Ossama Bin Laden began, as it did last year, outside the façade of the run-down Spinghar Hotel in Jalalabad. An Afghan holding a Kalashnikov rifle invited me to travel in a car out of town. But *this time* – instead of a journey across the deserts and Russian-bombed villages of the plains – we headed past the roaring waters of a great river and up into the mountains, overtaking trucks and a string of camels, their heads turning towards our headlights in the gloom. Two hours later we stopped on a stony hillside and, after a few minutes, a pick-up truck came bouncing down the rough shale of the mountainside.

An Arab in Afghan robes came towards the car. I recognised him at once from our last meeting in a ruined village. "I am sorry Mr Robert, but I must give you the first search," he said, prowling through my camera bag and newspapers. And we set off up the track which Osama Bin Laden built during his jihad against the Russian army in the early 1980s, a terrifying, slithering two-hour odyssey along fearful ravines in rain and sleet, the windscren misting as we climbed the cold mountain.

"When you believe in jihad, it is easy," he said, fighting with the steering wheel as stones scuttered from the tyres, bouncing down ravines into the clouds below. From time to time, lights winked at us from far away in the darkness. "Our brothers are letting us know they see us," he said.

After an hour, two armed Arabs — one with his face covered in a scarf, eyes peering at us through spectacles — came screaming from behind two rocks. "Stop! Stop!" As the brakes were jammed on, I almost hit my head on the windshield. "Sorry, sorry," the bespectacled man said, putting down his anti-tank rocket launcher and pulling from his pocket an electronic metal detector, the red light flicking over my body in another search.

The road grew worse as we continued, the jeep skidding backwards towards sheer cliffs, the headlights illuminating terrifying gorges on either side. Still clutching the wheel, the Arab fighter turned to me and smiled. "Toyota is good for jihad," he said. I could only agree.

In the moonlight, I could see clouds both below us in the ravines and above us, curling round mountain tops, the headlights now shining on frozen waterfalls and icy pools. Ossama Bin Laden knew how to build his wartime roads – many an ammunition truck and tank had ground up here during the titanic struggle against the Red Army. Now the man who led those guerrillas – the first Arab fighter in the battle against Moscow – was back again in the mountains he knew. There were more Arab checkpoints, more screaming orders to halt.

tened to this in silence. "We are still at the beginning of our military action against the American forces," he said.

If the United States regarded him as the foremost "terrorist" in the world - as I suggested to him they did - then "if liberating my land is called terrorism, this is a great honour for me". And so we embarked on a three-and-a-half hour interview in which the US was damned for supporting Israel, but in which Europe was faintly praised for its slow departure from American policy in the Middle East.

For him, there was no difference, he said, between the American and Israeli governments, between the American and Israeli armies. But Enrope was beginning to distance itself from the Americans, especially France - although he condemned French policies towards north Africa. He did not

because of its oil but – more importantly – because it feared “(along with the Zionists)” that they and their local agents would drown in the Islamic uprising.” Of the strict Islamist Taliban militia, which now controls three-quarters of Afghanistan and in whose region Bin Laden now lives, he said that he had “struggled alongside them” since 1979. “We believe that Taliban are sincere in their attempts to enforce Islamic religious law. We saw the situation here before [they took over] and after, and have seen an obvious improvement.”

Big Dawa camp, however, was not a desert. The water was, yes, brackish. But the lowlands were undulating to have me taken back to Jalalabad during the Taliban checkpoint at midnight. So I spent the night under the stars at his guerrilla camp, close to the massive rock-cave air-raid shelter that he built during the Russian war. When the Arabs drove me back before dawn next day, they knelt by the roadside to pray, pausing on rugs with their rifles beside them, crying "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest) as the landscape of rivers and snow-capped mountains and amid the pageants of clouds and the sun and the stars above us, a great comet trailed down the sky with a fiery tail, unseen since the time of the Pharaohs. It was, I learned later, the Hale-Bopp comet. "They say that after a comet, there will be a great war," one of the Arabs said to me.

We had driven past the police barracks in Jalandhar at first light but, minutes later, a thunderous explosion tore across the road, incinerating every driver within 100 metres, a massive blast at the local munitions store that killed at least 50 men, women and children and left hundreds wounded. The Taliban were on the streets, beating back relatives of the dead with sticks, a mile-high column of brown smoke belching into the sky. It was not difficult to see how this broken, dangerous nation could engender anger and an acceptance of death; even a desire to turn the weapons once used against the Soviets upon the world's only surviving superpower.

“We set off up the track ... a terrifying, slithering two-hour odyssey along fearful ravines”

"No one can get to us here," the driver muttered.

Overhearing his conversation, Bin Laden looked fatigued when he entered the tent in which I was sitting cross-legged on a rug, blanket, or mat, left at the entrance. At times during our conversation, he paused for at least a minute to choose his words. He was, however, studiously polite, offering the usual Arab courtesies of food to a stranger and a jar of cheese, olives, bread, and tamar. But his message was unequivocal, even brutal, while couched with the usual conditional clauses. "I am not against the American people only their government," he said. "How many times have I heard that phrase? I told him I thought the American people regarded their government as their representatives. He lis-

mention Algeria but the name hovered over us for several minutes like a ghost.

He gave me a Pakistani wall poster in Urdu which proclaimed the support of Pakistani scholars for his holy war against the Americans, even colored photographs of graffiti on the walls of Karachi, demanding the ousting of US troops from "the place of the two Holy Shrines (Mecca and Medina)". He said, he received some months ago an emissary from the Saudi royal family who said that Bin Laden would have his Saudi citizenship and assets returned to him and that the family would receive 2 billion Saudi Riyals (\$339m) if he abandoned his jihad — declared on 23 August — and went back to Saudi Arabia. He had rejected the offer and so had his family, he said.

The US was in Saudi Arabia

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DOUGLAS AND

Suicide blast buries last peace hopes under the rubble of Tel Aviv

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

The suicide bomber who blew himself up yesterday in a café in Tel Aviv, killing two people and wounding 47, may have finally ended any lingering hopes of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, immediately accused Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, of giving the "green light" for the resumption of violence. The bombing, the first for over a year, was claimed by Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation.

The explosion took place as people sat down to lunch in the courtyard of the Appropos Coffee House, on Ben Gurion Boulevard, in the centre of Tel Aviv. A man entered carrying two bags. "He looked strange," said Ron Tzur, a waiter.

"I was trying to pick up an order. A second later, there was a tremendous flash and he blew up."

Among the injured were children in fancy dress who were celebrating the Jewish settlement of Purim. A six-month-old baby dressed in a red and blue clown's uniform was taken away covered in blood. The two bags



A sapper inspecting what is thought to be the suicide bomber's body in the ruins of the café. Photograph: AP

carried by the bomber, in keeping with previous attacks, contained ball bearings and nails, in order to kill and wound as many people as possible.

The suicide bombing came four days after Israel started to build a Jewish settlement at Har Homa in east Jerusalem on land which was captured in 1967. Asked if the building of the settlement might have led to the attack, Mr Netanyahu said: "I find that line of questioning obnoxious and immoral."

The new settlement and the bombing together make it unlikely that Israel will end its occupation of the West Bank immediately after the attack. Identity papers found near the remains of the bomber suggest that he comes from Zuhir village, near Hebron, which is under Israeli security control.

Even before the attack, Palestinian politicians said that because of their inability to stop Har Homa their moderate methods might be replaced by violence. Faisal Hussein, the Palestinian leader in Jerusalem, who had spent the night in a tent at a peace camp he has established on a hill near where Israeli bulldozers are breaking ground for the settlement for 27,000 Jews, said: "People are not listening to us. So they may say to us: 'Thank you, but stand aside.'"

Salah al-Hamari, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said: "Israel fired a bullet into the peace process. They want us to declare it dead. Let them give it the death certificate."

In Hebron, the Palestinian city from which Israeli forces partially withdrew in January, there was confrontation but also co-operation between Israelis and Palestinians. In the morning some 500 boys attacked Israeli troops with stones in the centre of the city. Troops

ing hundreds of his men in and out of uniform to drive back the rioters. Linking arms they marched down the street, shouting: "Go home, boys." A unit of Palestinian soldiers were showered with stones by a Palestinian crowd as they clambered through the window of a building to evict stone throwers who were attacking Israeli troops. The Israeli soldiers, for their part, wrestled an M-16 rifle away from a policeman who was about to open fire.

Local people said they were angry about Har Homa. Shams Edin, 35, a restaurant owner, said: "It is as if you went to drink a glass of water and somebody spits in it." Nevertheless, an opinion poll this week by the Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies, showed that only 9 per cent of Palestinians approved of taking armed action in response to the settlement.

The problem for Mr Netanyahu is that if he wants to stop further suicide bombings he needs the co-operation of the Palestinian security services. He defeated the previous Israeli government in the election last May after four suicide bombings, three by Hamas and one by Islamic Jihad. Two bombs



A policewoman carrying a wounded child from the scene of the blast in Tel Aviv. Photograph: Reuters

were on board different Number 18 buses on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem and exploded a week apart. The last bomb was at the Dizengoff centre in Tel Aviv, a few streets away from yesterday's attack. It left 13 dead.

Mr Netanyahu accuses Mr Arafat of releasing Hamas members and leaders in recent weeks and therefore giving his tacit assent for the resumption of suicide attacks. He said in an interview in the daily *Mu'arri* yesterday: "When the PA [Palestinian Authority] opens its prison gates and releases the leaders of terrorists who declare their intent to renew attacks - it is clear we will view the PA as responsible for these attacks."

But if Mr Arafat does not return to the policy of the "iron fist" against Hamas, which means imprisonment without trial, and torture, he will expect Mr Netanyahu to abide by the terms of the Oslo agreement.

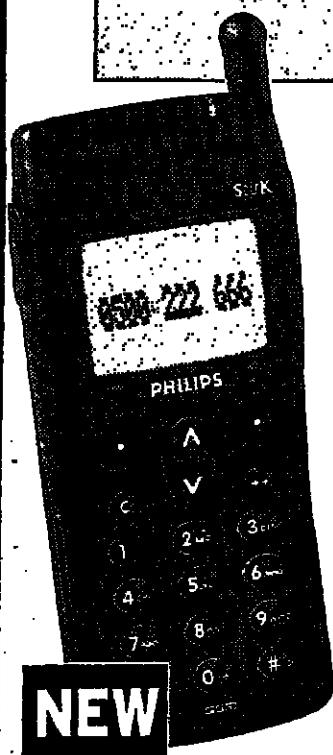
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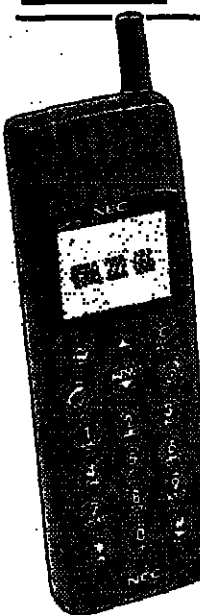
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carried by the bomber, in keeping with previous attacks, contained ball bearings and nails, in order to kill and wound as many people as possible.

The suicide bombing came four days after Israel started to build a Jewish settlement at Har Homa in east Jerusalem on land which was captured in 1967. Asked if the building of the settlement might have led to the attack, Mr Netanyahu said: "I find that line of questioning obnoxious and immoral."

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international

Zairean rebels pledge to fight on to Kinshasa

With its army routed, its prime minister paralysed and its ailing leader already in exile, the corrupt and ineffectual regime of Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko seems to be living out its last days.

The ailing president left France for home yesterday, after receiving treatment for cancer. But the rebels said his return made no difference. As Kinshasa buzzes with rumours of a military coup, Laurent Kabila and his victorious rebels plan to make sure that it is they and not the Mobutists who call the final shots of the war.

Although its frontline troops have only just captured Kisangani, 300 miles from Kinshasa, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire says it intends to fight all the way to the capital if the authorities there – whoever they may turn out to be – do not swiftly come to terms.

Four months ago, when the rebels emerged from the hills of southern Kivu to capture the

The Mobutu regime seems to be living out its last days.

Ed O'Loughlin, in Goma, reports

Uganda veterans of the 1986 war against Milton Obote and of the 1994 campaign that ousted Rwanda's genocidal Hutu regime. Both countries had poor relations with Mr Mobutu, who allowed Ugandan rebels and Rwandan Hutu infiltrators to operate from his territory.

Uganda and Rwanda have consistently denied these claims, but Westerners who were in Rwanda and Zaire during the Kivu campaign last year noted distinct similarities in style between the rebels holding the towns and the well-disciplined fighters of the Rwandan Patriotic Army.

Journalists were present last November when RPA troops attacked across the border from neighbouring Gisenyi, ostensibly to drive off Zairean Armed Forces (FAZ) who had mortared the town. Goma fell to the rebels the same day.

Since then, some of the rebel officers in Goma have been identified as Zairean-born Tutsis who had left Zaire in the late 1980s and early 1990s to join the Rwandan Patriotic Front, then in exile in Uganda.

Whatever the nature of the links between the rebel forces and the Rwandan government, few in eastern Zaire doubt the links are strong.

The rebels' leader, Laurent Kabila – a non-Tutsi whose name was first linked to the rebellion a month after it broke out – has been at pains to show that Zaireans of all ethnic groups are flocking to the rebel cause. He claims to have more than 15,000 men under arms, including numerous defectors from the FAZ.

The source of the rebels' equipment and ammunition is unclear, although they have, as Mr Kabila claims, captured large quantities of both from the FAZ and its allies in the exiled Rwandan Hutu army.

While they have mortars and some artillery pieces, the rebels seem to rely mainly on small arms and the tactics of stealth and surprise perfected by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in 1994.

People in the captured towns have said that the rebels seem to operate in small groups. They often infiltrate at night and the ensuing confusion, together with a few mortar rounds, has usually been enough to frighten off the demoralised, untrained and unpaid FAZ soldiers.

The identity of the commanders directing these tactics remains largely unknown, although Mr Kabila's son is officially credited with leading the capture of Kisangani. André Kissasse, who described himself

as the alliance's military leader last November, was killed shortly afterwards, reportedly in an ambush.

Whoever Mr Kabila's generals are, they could yet win the war without fighting a battle. Mr Kabila said this week that superior knowledge of the terrain – mostly thick jungle, rivers and swamps – ensured his fighters had little difficulty coping with the 300-odd white mercenaries imported by Mr Mobutu at the beginning of the year.

While some rebel leaders have said the southern city of Lumumbashi is their next objective, Mr Kabila says his men are also acquiring boats for a fresh advance down the Zaire river towards Kinshasa.



Brothers at war: A Singrok supporter threatening a fellow soldier he believes is not loyal

Photograph: Reuters

Dogs of war leave Papuans to fate

Staff and Agencies

Dozens of African mercenaries hired by Papua New Guinea to put down an island rebellion headed home, leaving behind them a nation in turmoil and a standoff between army and government.

As police clamped down on fresh unrest, about 50 mercenaries flew out of Port Moresby – expelled by the soldiers they were meant to have fought alongside. Some later flew via Hong Kong to South Africa.

The crisis kept Papua's neighbours on guard. Australia, the country's former colonial ruler, said it had put its troops on increased readiness in case the crisis worsened.

Local radio reported that rioting had spread outside the capital yesterday, with police firing tear gas to disperse thousands of demonstrators in the northern town of Lae.

Rescue plan for 470 Britons

British forces plan to rescue an estimated 470 British citizens from Zaire if the country disintegrates with the further advance of the rebels, senior defence sources said yesterday, writes Christopher Bellamy.

If a rescue has to be carried out, the Ministry of Defence was yesterday planning to move the main group north from the capital, Kinshasa, across the Zaire river into Brazzaville.

A second group would be moved from Lumumbashi, in the south of the country.

The operation would, like that in Albania, involve special forces troops on the ground, helicopters and Hercules transport planes.

frontier towns of Goma and Bukavu, few people took seriously their threat to overrun the entire country. But after the fall last weekend of Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city, it seems possible that the shadowy rebel army can indeed take Mr Kabila, who yesterday visited Kisangani, all the way to Kinshasa if Mr Mobutu or his successors refuse to give up power.

Originally dominated by ethnic Tutsis from the Kivu region, who rebelled last October following government pogroms, the rebels remain a largely unknown, invisible force. Tight controls on movement in rebel areas ensured that few journalists or aid workers have got anywhere near the fighting.

Kinshasa and its allies claim that there is a reason for this secrecy. They allege that the bulk of the fighting is being done by troops from the Rwanda and

significant shorts

Albanian rebels insist Berisha be ousted

Rebel Albanian leaders tempered their opposition to the caretaker government but insisted President Sali Berisha be ousted and that they be given a voice in running the country. After meeting in Tepelena, 100 miles from Tirana, leaders of 12 rebel-controlled districts called on the Prime Minister, Bashkim Fino, to set up a presidential council to rule until elections are held, by June at the latest. AP – Tirana

Serbian TV station blacked out

The most trusted television station in Serbia has been blacked out across most of the country amid a battle for control of the media before elections this year. The state telecommunications authority cut independent B92 television's transmission lines, stopping broadcasts to cities south of the capital. Reuters – Belgrade

Write on from the East

Two East European authors won Leipzig book prizes for work generating deeper understanding between European people. Imre Kertész, from Hungary, received the top prize of DM20,000 (£7,400) for *Diary of a Slave*, about the fate of Jews during the Holocaust. The second prize went to the Prague publicist and author Antonín Liehm for his culture magazine *Lettre Internationale*. AP – Leipzig

Armenia's break with the past

The Armenian President, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, named the leader of Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region, Robert Kocharyan, as Armenia's new prime minister. Reuters – Yerevan

Scent of success

Shops in Ashgabat have started selling a French-made scent for men named after Turkmenistan's leader, Saparmurat Niyazov, the focus of an expanding personality cult. Reuters – Ashgabat

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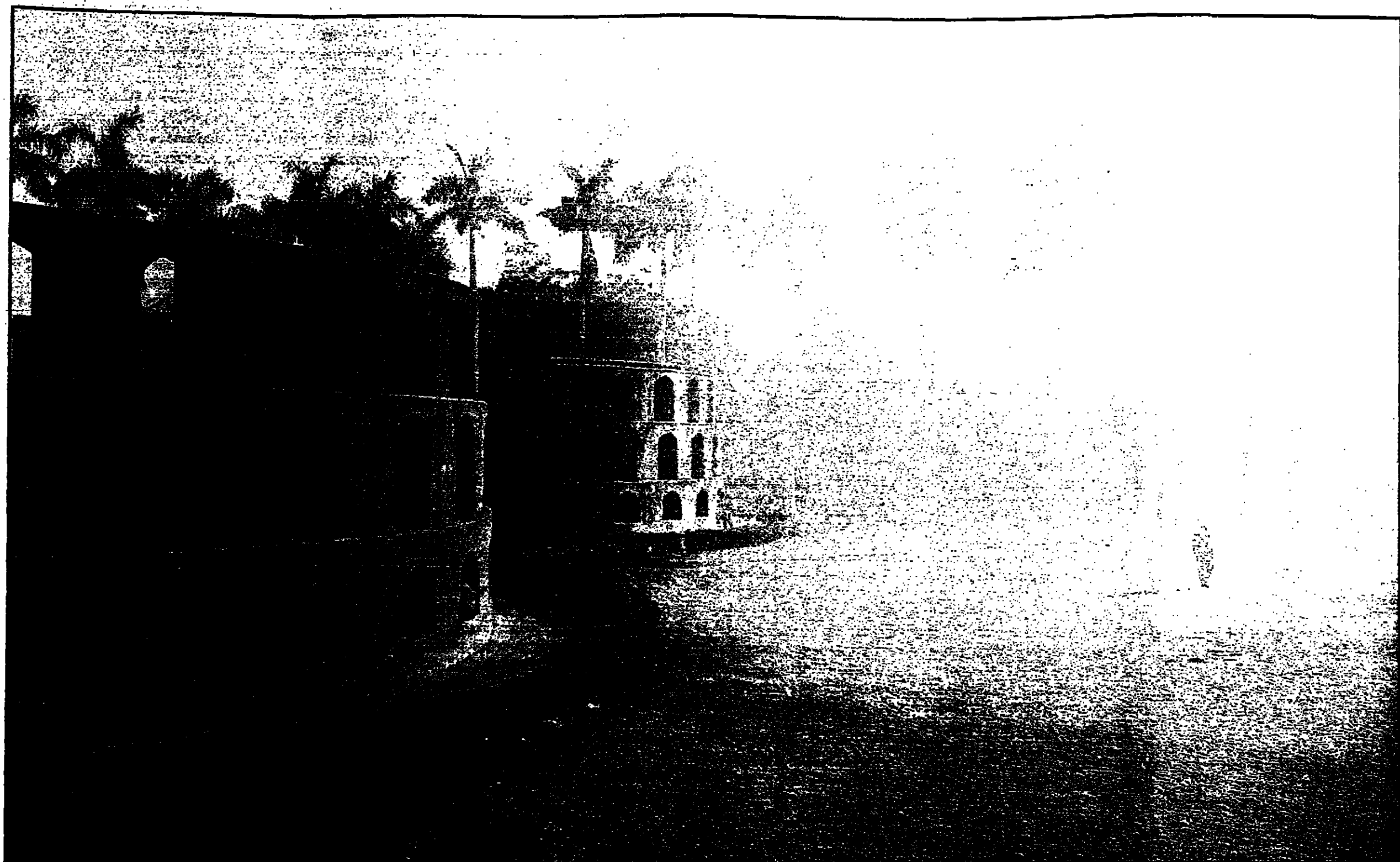


IMAGE OF THE WEEK In pre-Colonial days, before Greenwich was established as the guide to the world's time, Jantar Mantar, the oldest observatory in India, set the hour on the sub-continent. It is to be one of the country's venues to celebrate the millennium. Photograph by Kalpesh Lathigra using a Nikon F90, Kodachrome 64 at 250th of a second, f16. To order a print of this picture (£14) phone 0171-293 2534



the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 22 MARCH 1997

Let's look at the historical background to the development of medicinal plants throughout the world, paying particular attention to those materials which are fragrant, either as essential oils or as herb materials. So let us journey back through time to the very beginnings of medicinal history. A check on our chronometer shows us to be in the year 1300BC.

Much of Egyptian culture centred on the use of essential oils. Throughout the Bible one finds numerous references to the custom of anointing various parts of the body. There are also many illustrations in papyrus, on artefacts and in tomb wall paintings of these undoubtedly expensive and precious oils being prepared and applied. If we look closely at Tutankhamen's throne, we can see the young Queen Ankhesenamun applying oils to his collar. In a panel from the gold shrine surrounding his sarcophagus, she is caught in the act of applying oils to the young pharaoh.

In many illustrations and carvings you will notice strange cones on people's heads. These were highly perfumed ingredients of low melting point; as the weather became warm, so the cone would slowly melt and the fragrant oils would run over them.

To make the oils, a man would first chop and fragment a fragrant piece of wood; then macerate the chips in wine. After a few days the liquor would be strained off. Fat and more fragrant herbs were added and then the mixture was slowly heated. The fragrant herbs obviously yielded their virtues more easily to the oily fat than to the hydro-alcoholic wine. The mixture was allowed to cool, so that the fat set and could be skimmed off.

Herbs and spices were then ground and mixed with this fat, which was fashioned into cakes and allowed to stand. The final product would today be called a pomade. Did the ancient Egyptians have an understanding of aromatherapy, or were they using the fragrances purely for the pleasure of their odour?

We do know that the ancient Egyptians used the seeds of the opium poppy, *Papaver somniferum*, in cooking, but that they were unaware of the narcotic properties of its crude. There is no evidence that they smoked hemp, either: they were not makers of spirits or drug abusers as far as we can tell.

We move next to India in 800BC. To a land of patchouli, cedarwood, cinnamon and precious spices,

WORDS OF THE WEEK

In a lecture to the Chelsea Physic Garden, a haven of herbs buried deep in the heart of London, chemist Anthony Dweck talked of Plants, Perfume and People and took his lessons from history. Here are some highlights



of gardenia and hibiscus and oils of exotic roses, but most of all the sensuous jasmine.

The most interesting use of jasmine oil was as an aphrodisiac. There are many reasons why a plant may heighten sexual stamina or libido, but jasmine is special. It does not work by irritating the genital tract, by stimulating blood flow or by acting as a tonic, nor does it act as a prophylactic or placebo.

What it does do, is heighten the alpha wave activity in the brain. When this activity is increased, so are awareness and perception. So its action is not physically to improve sex, but it may improve the mental stimuli that are required to get things going and, more to the point, keep them going.

Now to A.D. 23, and one of the earliest recorders of herbal medicine. We are in Como in northern Italy just in time to witness the birth of Caius Plinius Secundus, or Pliny the Elder, who wrote many books, of which only one survives, a work of a mere 37 volumes. A passage that I particularly like is: "A poultice is more efficacious if laid upon him by a maiden, herself fasting and naked, who at the same time has to repeat certain special words." I have no doubt that any man would feel immensely better under these conditions, but have been unable to ascertain what the words should be.

On to the 12th century and the small German town of Bingen. Here we find a remarkable lady, a mystic, stateswoman, writer of holy songs and phenomenal

herbalist: the Abbess Hildegard von Bingen. Many of her recipes include fragrant herbal materials.

There is an interesting cure for hay fever, which is to inhale the fumes from smoking yew wood, prepared by placing the shavings in a flowerpot, then heating the pot. A flowerpot seems a strange idea, because it has a hole in the bottom, but the air circulates through the bottom and convects upwards, carrying more vapour than a pot without the hole.

(I tried this at home to see what it smelt like. Apart from setting off smoke alarms all over the house, it certainly had a pungent and eye-watering effect, and seemed to relieve nasal congestion.)

Then we move on to a village near Carmarthen in Wales to meet the physicians of Mydyval, renowned herbalists of the 15th century. They offer this recipe, which I would certainly avoid, for application to "proud flesh", which I interpret as another term for overactive fibroblast activity and the formation of excessive scar tissue:

"Take a toad that can scarcely creep, beat it with a rod, till irritated, it smells, and dies [How irritated can you get?]. Then put it in an earthen pot, closing the same so that no smoke can come out or air enter in. Burn it till it is reduced to ashes, and apply the same to the part." Not exactly animal-friendly.

We now venture timidly into the 15th century and make our way to London, where we discover a pot of Gilbert's ointment. Suffering from sore lips, we

apply some of the soothing salve and read the recipe on the label: "Take a very fat puppy dog and skin him: then take the juice of cucumber, rue and pellitory: berries of ivy and juniper: fat of vulture, fox and bear in equal parts: stuff the puppy therewith and boil him. Add wax to the grease that floats on the surface and make therefrom an ointment. This product has not been tested on animals. Signed, Gilbertus Anglicus."

In 1493 we come upon Philipp Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (mercifully better known to us as Paracelsus). He wrote: "The mind need not concern itself with the physical constitution of the plants and roots. It recognises the powers and virtues intuitively thanks to the signatures they carry."

This may be best explained with a few examples. Heartsease or wild pansy, *Viola tricolor*, has heart-shaped lower leaves, so according to Paracelsus's doctrine it should be good for the heart. In fact it is a heart tonic, and has been used in cases of heart failure.

Celandine, or *Chelidonium majus*, has a bright yellow juice, so should be good for biliary conditions and jaundice. Examination of its properties shows it to be an antispasmodic, reducing inflammation of the biliary ducts, and it has been used successfully to treat jaundice. Walnut, or *Juglans regia*, looks like a brain, so should be good for headaches or mental disturbances. We discover that the walnut is one of the foods rich in manganese, important for nerves, brain and cartilage.

In 1597 John Gerard, an Elizabethan physician, published his great "herbal or the historie of plants". He refers to a plant not only as valerian, but also as setwall; surprisingly he is using the dry root as an antidote for poison, and for the healing of "sleight cuts". He writes: "They that will have their heale, must put Scwall in their keale." (I don't know whether a keale is some type of postage or stew, or simply a saucepan).

The excitement of plant discovery begins to tarnish as modern drugs start to replace traditional remedies. This is progress. But the pendulum swings. The teaching of plant pharmacy is again on the increase, public awareness is increasing and clinical scepticism is on the wane.

INSIDE

John Walsh meets Mark Radcliffe

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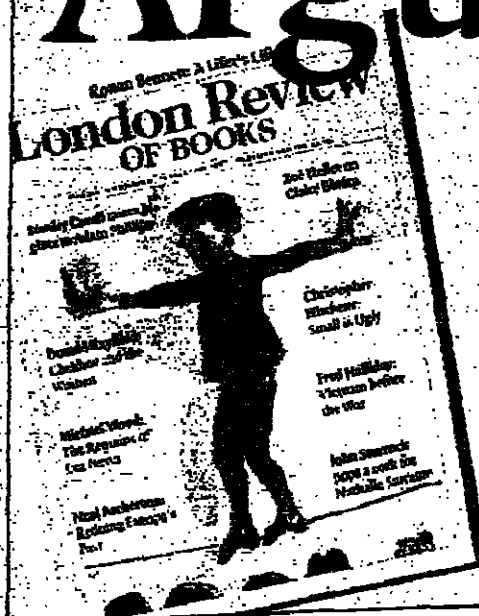
Railway children get return ticket

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THE LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS is many things, but it is not an easy read. Simply because the issues facing the world today are not easy ones. Here is just a handful of the subjects and authors which have appeared in recent issues: Martha Gellhorn on the deaths of Brazilian children, Paul Foot on Tory sleaze, Christopher Hitchens on

Clinton sleaze, Alan Bennett's diary, Jenny Diski's memories of childhood, Colin Tóibín on poetry and AIDS, Jacqueline Rose on Virginia Woolf, Frank Kermode on Judas Iscariot, Edward Luttwak on the iniquity of central banks, Helen Vendler on T.S. Eliot, Eric Hobsbawm on the Russian Revolution.

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A life sentence in cyberspace

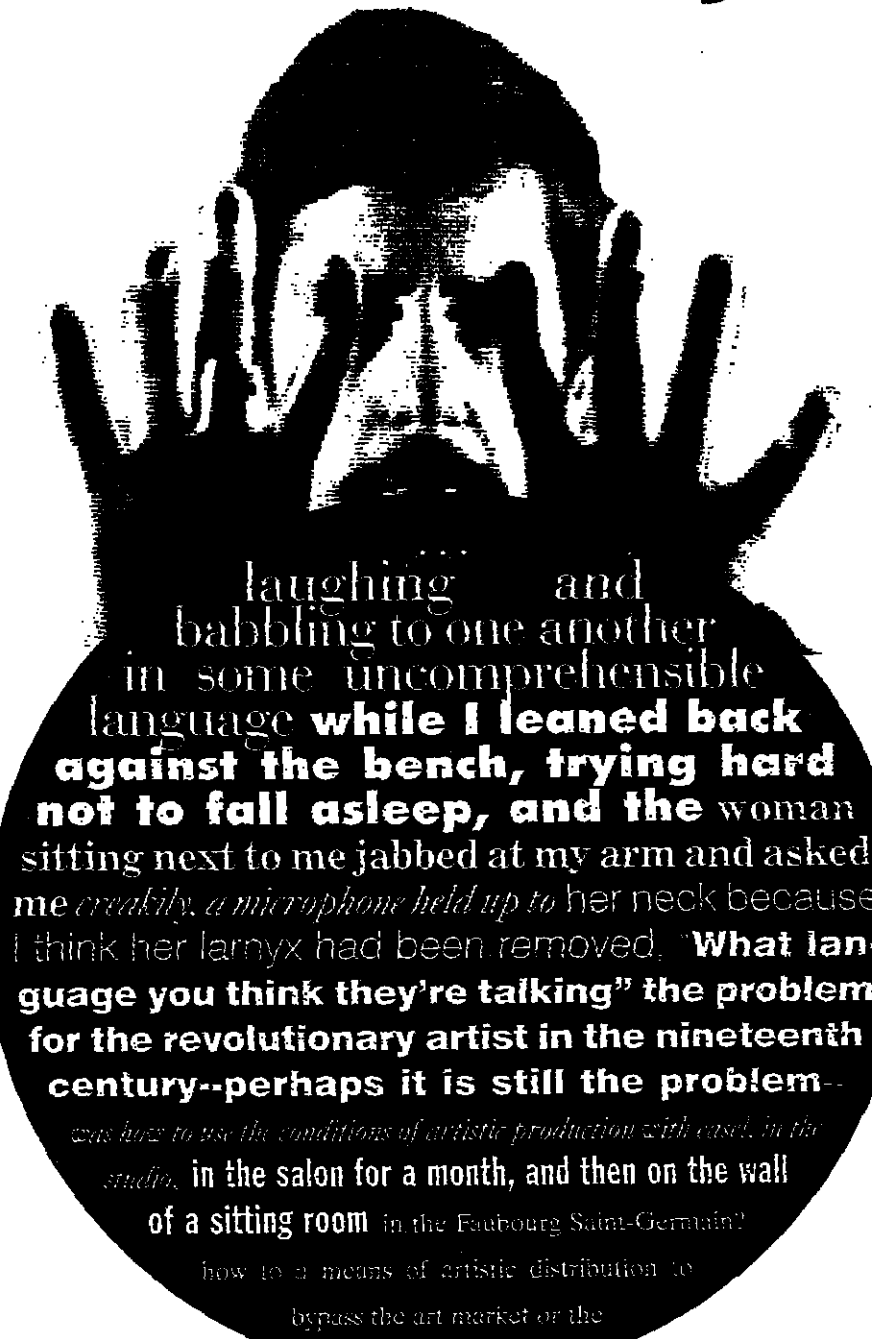
William Hartston meets the man who hopes his work will never come to a full stop

Say fellers, wouldn't it be a great idea if everyone in the world, or at least on the Internet, 'cos that's the next best thing, all joined together in writing a never-ending sentence to which everyone could contribute whenever and wherever they liked, with the only rule being that nobody can ever use a full stop or put an end to the sentence in any other way, thus ensuring that it would go on for ever and the whole thing would be a sort of global stream of consciousness reflecting the ideas and personalities of everyone, individually and corporately, who contributed to it, making it not only the world's first collaborative sentence but also the world's longest and most amazing work of all time, constantly mutating yet with every detail faithfully preserved for ever and

Stop! That's enough! Full stop. There, I've done it. But I hope it has given you the idea. It all started in December 1994, "at the beginning of time as far as digital art is concerned", as Douglas Davis, the man who started the World's First Collaborative Sentence, explains it. Davis is a 63-year-old artist from New York who was one of the pioneers of video art in the Seventies and has been at the forefront of video and performance art ever since. He gained celebrity status particularly through one television interview in which he placed his hands directly on the camera and invited the audience to get up and touch their screens - to meet fingers with him and think about whether they were really touching.

The amazing thing is that many did so. They also enjoyed his participative art works featuring a video-camera, through which the spectator became part of the object being viewed. Such explorations of the ambiguous relationship between performer and audience are taken a step further with the Sentence (which, as its contributors never tire of pointing out, is not really a sentence at all).

Okay, it's a nice idea, but is the World-Wide Web (aka the Net-nerd nation) any place to expect creative collaboration? Douglas Davis admits that when it began, he did not know what to expect. "I didn't know if we would attract an audience, or what type of audience." But he soon decided that the Sentence was indeed providing a worthy display of "the wit and dexterity of the Web world". It shows, he says, "the diversity and unpredictability of



laughing and babbling to one another in some incomprehensible language while I leaned back against the bench, trying hard not to fall asleep, and the woman sitting next to me jabbed at my arm and asked me *crankily*, a microphone held up to her neck because I think her larynx had been removed. What language you think they're talking? the problem for the revolutionary artist in the nineteenth century - perhaps it is still the problem - was how to use the conditions of artistic production with ease, in the studio, in the salon for a month, and then on the wall of a sitting room in the Faubourg Saint-Germain? how to use the means of artistic distribution to bypass the art market or the

world's mind". Diverse definitely: unpredictable, unarguably - but is it good for anything?

"The sentence tells you there is a lot of spunk out there - brilliance and rhetorical anger. But there's one thing you don't see. You don't see stupidity."

Hang on a moment. I said to the creator of the world's longest sentence. Have you read the thing? It's full of stupidity.

We never really resolved that point, nor did we reach any clear conclusions about the relationship between concept and content in such a collaborative work of art. The concept is magnificent: an all-embracing, world-wide, teach the world to sing in perfect harmony, unending Coca-Cola ad of perfection. But the content is predominantly sad and dreary. The Sentence would now be some 500

pages long if printed out single-spaced, in a small type size, on A4 paper. Many thousands of people have contributed to it, in a wide variety of languages (but mainly English), and more than 150,000 have logged on to the site to read at least a part of it. It has become the world's largest wall of cyber-graffiti, with a lot of filth (none well enough written to be exciting), a good deal of self-pitying, and just the occasional gem of genuine wit or expressive writing. But there is no doubt that the Sentence is an important cultural phenomenon.

Many of us have played the game where each person in turn adds a letter to an ever-growing word, the only rules being that you must never complete a word, but you must always have in mind one that can be completed from the letters so far played. Some of us have played a similar game in which a sentence is written one word at a time, the only rules being that it has to make sense, and may never come to a full stop. Mathematicians among us may even have played a game where players add digits one at a time to a number, trying to keep it prime and losing a life if another player can name a divisor.

But none of this can compare with a game played simultaneously by thousands of people around the world, all contributing to the same sentence. This is surely the ultimate word game. It is just rather a pity that the people playing it do not yet seem to have realised its potential. Or if they have, then perhaps it wasn't such a good idea in the first place.

If you want to contribute to the Sentence, or just see how it's getting along, the best place to start is at: <http://math.240.lehman.cuny.edu/art>.

If you want something even more exciting, you'll have to wait until 1 May, when Douglas Davis's next Web project is unveiled. The objective is a collaborative redesign of the perfect human body from examples sent from all over the world. Download a body of your choice, improve it, and send it back. "Let the world have its say," says Douglas Davis. "Nobody knows what the world will say."

Games people play

Pandora Melly improves her social game-playing skills

Celestria Noel, social editor of 'Harpers & Queen' magazine

I play pelmanism with my daughter Catherine, who is six-and-a-half. This is the game where you lay all the cards face down on the floor, and have to turn up two cards at a time. The person who gets the most pairs wins, and the trick is to remember where the pairs are.

When she was younger, we used to play with "Spot the Dog" cards, and I often had to force myself to forget that Steve the Monkey was right next to me, as Catherine - like most children - is a bad loser. When they are tiny, you have to let them win a bit, or they get disappointed and give up.

Now that she is older we play with real playing cards, and I'm torn between beating her so that she will learn to be a good sport, or letting her win to encourage her. As they get older, you have to be cleverer about losing on purpose, as they get suspicious. Most people play Snap with

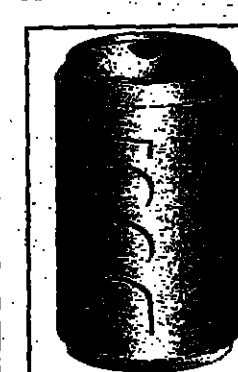
their children, but when they're very young, they take ages to recognise a pair of cards, and you can get a bit bored staring out of the window until they notice. At least pelmanism is more fun for the adult, as it offers the chance to test your own memory.

I am hoping that Catherine will develop card sense, which is a useful thing. The world is divided between those who do and those who don't have it. Enjoying card games can be a blessing, and it is useful in a situation when you are with a group of people who may not otherwise have much in common. When playing bridge, for instance, you do not have to make polite conversation for its own sake, so it can be very relaxing.

For budding social editors wishing to hone their professional skills and test their memory, we recommend *Royalists*, a board game based on knowledge of royal history. £27.99 from Hamleys. (0171-734 3161 for mail order details).

Don't junk it... use it

How to drink beer without fearing a power cut



As you settle in front of your television set, preparing to sip your way through a six-pack of lager and watch a good late-night programme about synchronised macramé or feng shui for bed-sits, do you ever harbour dark fears that a power cut may disrupt your pleasure? If so, here is a remedy that I have found infallible:

When you have drained your first can, cut off its top and bottom with a strong pair of scissors as indicated in the diagram. Then cut down the vertical dotted line and open out to form a flat rectangle.

Cut about 4cm off the long side to leave a piece about 14cm by 16cm.

Then - and this is very important if you do not want to food-process your fingers at the end of the operation, crimp the edges with a pair of pliers by folding in a narrow hem all the way round.

Turn the previously saved bottom end over, with the concave side uppermost, and place it on the metal sheet. Now all you have to do is scrunch up the sheet to leave the can-bottom sitting comfortably inside a tent-like construction.

And there you have it - the beer-can candle-holder. Adjust it with long-nose pliers to improve the shape and grip on your candle, ensure that a box of matches is within easy reach, and now you may return to enjoy your second can without fearing any interruption from power cuts.

Except, of course, to the television synchronised macramé and feng shui, which probably wasn't all that exciting anyway.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

Edited highlights (and lowlights) of the World's First Collaborative Sentence

I DID NOT FEEL SEPARATED I FELT VERY CLOSE EVEN THOUGH WE WERE THOUSANDS OF MILES APART AND I WAS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE HERE I FELT CLOSE HOW ARE YOU THIS IS DURBAN WE FEEL WE ARE A PART OF THE WORLD AT LAST IN THE PALACE HERE I AM WAITING FOR THE PRESIDENT I SEND YOU GREETINGS HERE I AM IN THE GALLERY LOOKING AT THIS BIG PENCIL I AM LAUGHING COGITO ERGO SUM GO GO GO SENTENCE swing swing swing ring ring ring ring lethererehereeverywhereGUMBOGUMB Ohellhole! DON'T KNOW WHAT TO

SAY ... WELL This thing of writing in all caps is getting a bit tiresome and why does this sentence have sound so disgusting and arty who do think we are janes joyce's greatgrandchildren or some kind of gertrude stein ... ISN'T IT JUST FUN TO WRITE TOGETHER LIKE THIS millennial exaggerations overstate our singularity basic humanity is as lonely as (I'm feeling a bit spacy) there are a lot of things that could be said, but I don't know what to say but I want to say it my father is coming near have to stop now he always comes upstairs like this in the middle of the night dust follows dust in the endless progression of biological kitchen-ware and still I was there, alone

on a large vast sea of metaphorical water, waiting for the sun to rise and shed some light on me, the fish, the frog, the boat and the lake THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN FROM BOMBAY ON A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA ONE DAY WAS TRAPPED IN THE TILLER BY A SEX CRAZED GORILLA AND CHINAS A LONG WAY AWAY And down went the bucket into the subconscious ... but you can find bits in German, Polish, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and other languages I could not even recognize, so it's global all right but not only, the content of the Sentence itself gives a very good sociological view of Net users ... some are writing off their phantasms as

they would on a graffiti wall, many are taking this Sentence as a game and take up the challenge of writing on and on what goes through their mind just to be part of history; because this sentence is now part of history. Doug, good job wid de sentence and not only that but a question mark or exclamation ends a sentence too but we can't have that now can we as watch the moon glide with dolphins in the rain and, tah dah! the End! not allowed when going for the longest? c'est bon! ... finish this sentence jerky and let our voice echo through interstellar space ... and that, my liege, is how we know the Earth to be banana-shaped; he's dead, Jim;

Chess William Hartston

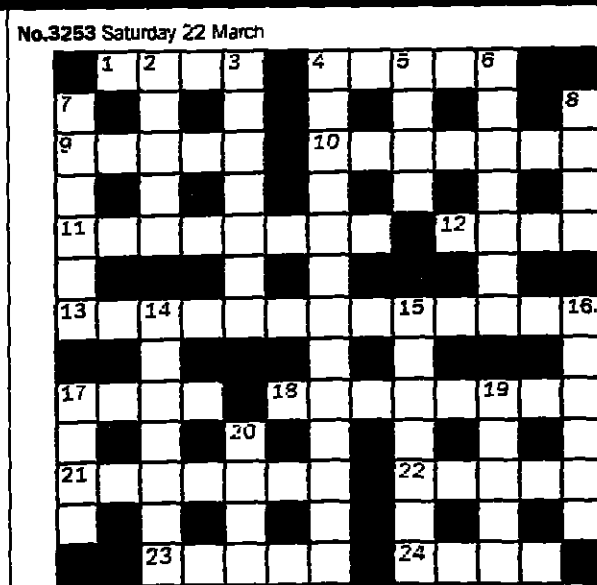
The ICI Katalco quickplay tournament at Norton Hall near Middlesbrough last weekend attracted a strong field, including five grandmasters, but the top names proved to be extremely accident prone.

In the opening round, Michael Adams, the top seed, blundered away a piece early on against one of the lowest-rated players. Staying calm, however, he contrived to confuse his opponent so well that he went on to win the game. That experience seemed to convince Adams that any effort spent looking for the best moves was liable to be wasted, so he spent the rest of the event playing very fast, getting some dubious positions, but always bamboozling his opponents as they ran out of time.

As pure chess, it was hardly impressive, but from a practical point of view it was the perfect formula. And nobody can argue with a score of five out of five.

The best game of the event was between the two runners-up, where grandmaster Bogdan Lalic was brilliantly upset by International Master Colin Crouch. Black's opening play has a high-class Karpovian tinge to it: he accepts a cramped position and a lag in development in exchange for the bishop pair which, he hopes, will become a powerful force if White pushes forwards too fast and opens the game.

Concise crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Fringe of hair (4)
 - 2 Packing-case (5)
 - 3 Foreigner (5)
 - 4 Children's room (7)
 - 5 Self-determination (4,4)
 - 6 Suture (4)
 - 7 Subject of telephone sales calls (6-7)
 - 8 Season of fasting (4)
 - 9 Old coin (8)
 - 10 Cocktail (7)
 - 11 Himalayan kingdom (5)
 - 12 German city (5)
 - 13 Hebridean isle (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Self-evident truth (5)
 - 2 Army commander (7)
 - 3 Inferno (13)
 - 4 Yorkshire river (4)
 - 5 Retired professors (7)
 - 6 Shattered (6)
 - 7 Legend (4)
 - 8 Disconcert (7)
 - 9 Word of opposite meaning (7)
 - 10 Silly laugh (6)
 - 11 Fruit (4)
 - 12 Drive (5)
 - 13 Prejudice (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Puerile, 2 Asian (Poor relation), 3 Doves, 4 Aeroviol, 10 Eternal, 11 Icon, 12 Bonanza, 13 Steady, 14 Return, 15 Overall, 22 Niggard, 23 Sat-on, 24 Torso, 25 Reliance, DOWN: 1 Padre, 2 Eastern, 3 Ill-res, 4 Enable, 5 Agharta, 6 Issue, 7 Nulley, 8 Bureaucracy, 9 Narrative, 15 Analyse, 16 Conductor, 18 Cigar, 20 Easel, 21 Loosely.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South

North
 ♠ K 8 5 2
 ♥ Q 7 3
 ♦ Q J 8
 ♣ 8 6 5

West
 ♠ Q 3
 ♥ 7 5
 ♦ 10 7 5 4 3 2
 ♣ Q 10 3 2

East
 ♠ J 10 9 7 6 4
 ♥ 9 8 6 2
 ♦ 9 6
 ♣ 9

South
 ♠ A
 ♥ A K J 10 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ A K J 7 4

"It was the best hand I have held for years!" complained South after this deal. "And I still ended with a minus score!" Can you find a way for declarer to have done better?

South had opened 2♣ and after North's semi-positive response of 2NT, it was difficult to avoid attempting a grand slam. They managed it, however, and the final contract was 6♣ by South. West led a trump and declarer looked approvingly at dummy's three small clubs. It

looked as though Seven would have depended on the club finesse.

Perhaps that was why South was over-confident about making Six. He won the lead in hand, cashed another top trump to reveal the 4-1 break, and unblocked his top honours in both spades and diamonds. Then he crossed to dummy's ♠Q, took one discard on ♠K, and attempted to take another on ♠Q. Oh dear! East ruffed this and, although South was able to over-ruff, he found that he still had two clubs to lose and, as a result, went one off.

Solution? To ensure his contract against most adverse distributions, South should start by drawing all the missing trumps before unblocking in spades and diamonds. Then he follows with the ace and a low club! If the suit breaks 3-2, he is home and dry; however, if it divides 4-1, then whoever wins the trick will have to lead another club for South to come to four tricks in the suit and give dummy an entry to its two seemingly abandoned winners.

Perplexity

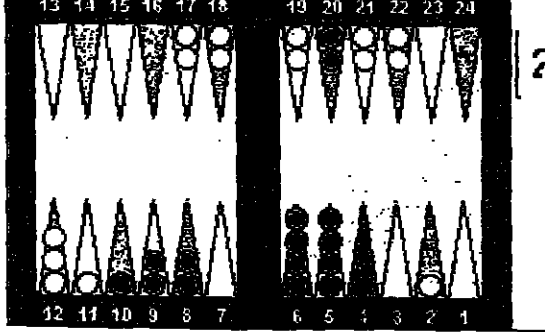
Pin Money

"I can always remember my pin number," said the professor as he slipped his card into the machine, "because if you spell out each digit as a word, then add up the positions in the alphabet of each letter used, the total is equal to the number itself." What was the professor's pin number? ("0", if used, is to be spelt as "zero"). The sender

of the first correct answer opened on 2 April will win a copy of the new Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

8 March answers: Neighbours (hours being), Eastenders (sneer sated), Emmerdale (rammed eel) Winner: Mrs P Hemmings, (London)

Backgammon Chris Bray



Here's a position from the 1994 Costa Rica final between Mike Svobodny and Mike Senkiewicz. Svobodny, White, owns the cube and has a 5-1 to play. How should he play it?

First, what is his plan? That is quite simple: he wants to escape his back man and get into a holding game where he will have the advantage, and as he owns the cube he will be seeking to win the game with a well-timed redouble.

There are two plays to consider, (a) 14/8 (b) 23/18, 14/13. Play (a) sits on the position and hopes for something better next time. Play (b) forces the issue but leaves 27 shots (any throw containing a 1,2 or 3). At the table, Svobodny quickly decided that 27 hits was too many and played the quieter 14/8. But let's look at some of those hits, for example 1-6, 2-6, 2-5, 2-4, 1-5, 1-4. They may hit but they leave Black with an ugly position and a lot of exposed blots.

Indeed, with rolls such as 6-1 and 6-2 it is probably right not to hit but to build the 4-point.

The key learning point here is that not all hits are equal, and it is important to consider the resultant position after a hit rather than just the number of hits. Of course, in a position where all 27 hits win outright you wouldn't leave a blot, but here the hits aren't decisive and in fact they deflect White from his game plan of priming Black's last man.

In the game, White's next roll was 5-1 and Black's 4-3, a sequence which would have produced a white man on the bar had Black played correctly. However it enabled White to make the 4-point and a couple of rolls later White had a full prime. Our old friend Jellyfish, the neural net computer program, prefers move (b) to move (a) by a very large margin. So, remember, don't just count shots; visualise the results of being hit by those shots!

Mark Radcliffe, at ease with both nob culture and slob culture: "Yeah, I like poetry. I might read John Donne and 'Loaded' magazine in the same evening"

PHOTOGRAPH BY NEWTEAM

"Wakey wake... yelled the radio behind my car, '... High!' A tiny backbeat started up, like the 'Tsst... tsst' noise that snakes from the personal stereo beside you on the Tube. A cacophony of wacky recordings assailed me like a blizzard, and a voice intoned the words 'Good morning, waking souls' like a town crier in a Restoration comedy. Without preamble, I was suddenly listening to Kula Shaker playing 'Hush'. The time was 7am. The last time I'd heard 'Hush' ('I thought I heard her calling my name now...'), it was by Deep Purple, circa 1968. The words 'Wakey wakey', or at least a mangled variant of them, used to be the call-sign of Billy Cotton, the rubicund impresario of the 1950s. The 'Good morning' was nearer the 1650s. Into what retro hell had I awakened?

Then I remembered, I was doing some elementary research before meeting Mark Radcliffe, the new man on the Radio 1 Breakfast Show. For the first time in a decade or two, I was deserting Sue McGregor and her attendant lords on *Today* to check out the wacky, zany voice of Radio Yoo. He is, let me remind you, the man who took over from Chris Evans five weeks ago, the man on whom the fortunes of Radio 1 depend, the man in whom Matthew Bannister has placed his most sacred trust, the man who can change the listening habits of millions of 18-25s...

All are important reasons for meeting Mr Radcliffe, but there's one more. Radcliffe has Added Value. As people went out of their way to tell me, he is not as other DJs. He is a Radio 4 sensibility in a Radio 1 playsuit. He is a man of learning and discernment, who introduced serious poetry and arts discussions into the evening slot on Radio 1, a chap who could hold his own with George Steiner and Christopher Ricks – and who, by virtue of his ease with both nob culture and slob culture, will become the bridge by which Radio 1 listeners will gravitate, in time, to Radio 4.

The only stumbling block to this exciting theory is Mr Radcliffe's show. It is hard to listen to his combination of yapping Mancunian cross-talk and idiotic quizzes without feeling your brain starting to leak out of your ears. And there is the problem with Mr Radcliffe's partner and comic foil, Marc Riley, invariably known as "Lard". His function in the show is inscrutable, beyond uttering wholly phatic observations such as "Did yer?" and "Really?", and shouting "Good call!" (after a furious riff from Radcliffe) or "Doreen from Bradford, get the bus!" (in answer to a reader's request that he helps to hasten her daughter's departure). Despite assurances that the show is "chock-full with quality items", the prevailing tone is of slightly desperate self-deprecation. "We're the egotists with yer eggs and the morons with yer museli," observes Radcliffe with pride, "the tosspots with yer roasts and the wazzocks with yer Weetabix." The co-presenters reflect on items in the paper, complain about shoddy workmanship, the decline in public services (because nobody has come to remove a blue plastic bag from the tree outside their window) and the flagrantly mendacious promise of "freshly cut sandwiches" on post-BR trains. They argue about these crucial topics in voices of mounting hysteria, an act clearly deriving from Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer though rather closer to the pub just before closing time. Signs of cultural "crossover" are disappointingly few, beyond a squib of verse from John Hegley and the Busy Buzzy B competition (which all the answers begin with "b"). ("Whose catchphrase is 'What's up, Doc?'")

Is Mr Radcliffe, then, adjusting his discourse for an audience of *epistemonimus*? Or biding his time until he knows his listeners well enough, upon which he will bombard them with lectures on Hegel or Connexity or Gender Quake? What, in other words, is he up to?

"One of my favourite compliments," said Radcliffe when we met, in a Manchester restaurant, "was from a guy who works as a roadie for a symphony orchestra. He said, 'I like your show, because it's just like an ordinary bloke 'avin' a go'. It was a real backhanded compliment, but I thought it was a compliment nevertheless. It's like all

the people in the past, who said about DJs, 'Oh anyone could do that'. Well yeah, but you have the confidence to keep talking when you've got nothing to say."

Not everyone has welcomed their ordinariness with untutored joy. "We got a lot of southern hate mail, initially," said the breakfast champion. "A barrage of faxes from the South, saying, 'I don't pay my licence fee to hear scummy northern bastards'. Some of them even accused us of trying to be 'too East End', which I don't understand. I think people misinterpret what we do as striking a blow for the North, because we chose to do the programme from here. But it's not about saying 'Manchester is great' or anything. It's just that this is where we live and it's great we didn't have to move. If you're just playing records and talking crap in between, you can do it anywhere."

All the self-deprecation – was it to stay one jump ahead of the hate mail or did they mean it? "It's just honest, isn't it? We're just chancing our arm, doing what we do. But it's a defence mechanism. If you set yourself up as fantastic, you're easy to knock down. Of course we think we're absolutely fantastic, really..."

The listening figures that will declare the Mark 'n' Lard show a hit or a scummy fiasco will not be out for another couple of weeks. They're expecting a ratings drop of about 10 per cent from the Chris Evans heyday. "Everyone seems happy about that," says Radcliffe cheerfully. "Whatever the relative merits of me and Chris Evans, when you make a change from something people are used to you always get a drop. Did he know what Evans made of the new show? 'Tve no idea. I used to work with Chris at Piccadilly Radio. He was just helping out, answering the phones and doing what he could. And we were in this band

together, Frank Sidebottom's Oh Blimey Big Band. I played drums and organ at the same time, and he used to sit on the side of the stage and read the paper. I haven't seen him for a couple of years. But he's supposed to have recommended us to Bannister when he walked off the show, so in a sense he elected his own successors."

Radcliffe was born in Bolton, the son of a journalist on the local *Evening News*, and then the *Daily Mail* and the BBC. His father reviewed classical music and took his son to orchestral concerts – enough of a grounding in the classical repertoire to land the future DJ a job, briefly, as Head of Music at Piccadilly Radio. At school he was "good at English, shit at Maths, not sporty at all, and always in a band, mostly as a drummer". His teen fascination for "prog rock" dinosaurs like Hawkwind, Gong and Amon Duul was overturned by the arrival, at Bolton Tech, of Dr. Feelgood, the deeply wonderful Canvey Island pub rockers led by Lee Brilleaux. The young Radcliffe gazed in wonder at "these four blokes in ill-fitting suits and bad haircuts. We thought it was fantastic, because it seemed like a pretty realistic aspiration to be like that". Then punk, then Manchester University, then a radio career as producer, presenter, and –

finally – Wake-upper General of the nation's somnolent youth.

Radcliffe in the flesh is less laddish and more self-contained than his radio persona might suggest. Sharply if monochromatically dressed (*Reservoir Dogs* suit from Next, white shirt from Marks), sharp-featured and sideburned, he looks a good deal younger than his 38 years. You could mistake him for a popular-with-the-boys English teacher

at a northern state school. What makes him an attractive DJ presence is precisely that air of decency combined with a readiness to say the unsayable. Such as the time on Channel 4's *The White Room* TV rock show, when Iggy Pop was grinding away on stage, naked of chest and transparent of trouser. "Iggy Pop," yelled Radcliffe to camera, "He's a legend. He's a star. But he's going to get his knob out!" On Radio 1, he is more circumspect, stopping short of the wildly tasteless. Discussing the Spanner consensual-sadomasochism case, "Apparently he was using her £30,000 award to buy a lovely, new, suitable motorcar". But just what sort of vehicle does a novelist in her prime (she is 79) buy? The lovely, suitable motorcar that Dame Muriel wants turns out to be an Alfa Romeo. *The crime de la crime*, and exactly what Jean Brodie would have driven herself if she had had the chance.

Speaking of culture, what was all this about him and poetry? How did the most recalcitrant of literary forms fit in with the lowest common denominator of broadcasting? Radcliffe explains. "When we started the evening show, it occurred to me that poetry was something that could work because of the way pop radio is structured, in short bursts of speech." So he encouraged Simon Armitage and Glyn Maxwell to read their work. "But it wasn't a mission to take culture to the masses, I think lots of false boundaries get drawn. In Italy, there's deemed to be no difference between going to the opera and going to a football match. I think that attitude's starting to pervade English society. Poetry used to be a Radio 4 thing which Radio 1 couldn't touch. I don't think that's valid. It's all there, available to anyone who wants to try it."

Did he read poetry at home? "Yeah, I like poetry. Yeah I'll read it at home."

about 1983. I think it was. I've no idea where they are now, but I think we're a very safe pair of hands. It's a bit pathetic that people have this need to be shocking and controversial and push it too far. I don't think the barometer of whether a show's good or not is how many people complain."

He has been impressed by the reaction of the newspapers to the brouhaha over Radio 1 last year. "Increasingly, the broadsheets seem to be reflecting the tabloid agenda," he said in one of his odd periodic bursts of committee-speak. "It goes back to when Matthew Bannister took over. *The Sun* had a picture of him sliding down a banister and knocking his bollocks off on the – what do you call the thing at the bottom? Newel post. But then you get *The Independent* and *The Guardian* leaping in and saying, 'Bannister is ruining Radio 1' – as if Dave Lee Travis and Simon Bates had been paragons of culture in this country."

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Did he read poetry at home? "Yeah, I like poetry. Yeah I'll read it at home."

although I might read, I don't know. John Donne and *Loaded* magazine in the same evening. I don't have a problem with that. We're not trying to occupy an intellectual high ground on the show, which is very knockabout. But the show's catchphrase 'Good morning, waking souls' is an allusion to Donne's 'The Good Morrow' – you know, 'Bisy old foole, unruly sonne'. The best line from the poem – 'And makes one little room an everwhere' – is fantastic, the whole world being encapsulated in this one room, because you're so into what you're doing. Which is, basically, shagging."

Radcliffe's bracing perspective on literature extends to the whole business of populism. I asked him about the crushing phrase "dumbing down" that my *Independent* colleague David Walker had used about him (in warning that "popular culture is intolerant of idiosyncrasy"). Radcliffe speared a tube of *penne all'arrabbiata*. "I think there's a basic misunderstanding here of the words 'dumb' and 'fun'. Things like the Busy Buzzy B game on the breakfast show, it's a completely banal, stupid, crass game, right? But everybody participating in it is aware of the irony in that. To resent the fact that it's fun is a very snobbish attitude. If something's fun, taking the piss, having a laugh, then it's assumed to be dumb. I don't buy into that at all. Our agenda is just to get from one record to the next and have a laugh and I don't see any intellectual low ground inherent in that. Could he fit snugly into bed with a Radio 4 audience? "That'd be great. But the idea that the people who listen to the *Today* programme don't want fun is ridiculous. I'm sure they'd be delighted if they could win a van or a football like on this morning show."

Radcliffe is interestingly critical of Melvyn Bragg, the downer of smart debate, for what he sees as a failure of judgement. "I think *Start the Week* is rubbish. It tries to occupy an intellectual high ground and has to argue in a really combative way, which isn't necessary. Melvyn Bragg sometimes is just rude." Doesn't it make for more exciting radio? "No, it's unpleasant. What people want is to see things *dehly manacred*." At 38, he's about twice the age of his core audience of waking souls, but it doesn't bother him. What did he see himself doing at 50? "Broadcasting, I think, once a week somewhere, maybe. I've always done shows that were driven by the music I like and I don't know if that's possible any more. Or if it's possible to backtrack, once you've put your head above the parapet and gone into *Today* time, I'll probably finish up doing the mid-afternoon show on Radio Northwich. But I'm sure I'll still be broadcasting – just because I can't do anything else."



Is this the One to wake our souls?



John Walsh meets... Mark Radcliffe

this case was about these four men who nailed their bits to a table in a caravan. "Amazing that, isn't it?" countered Lard. "Getting four men inside a caravan..." "I was given a copy of the BBC's guidelines about taste and sex," says Radcliffe.

belong to a deeply unfashionable minority – we few, we allegedly traumatised few, who have actually seen the film *Crash* in Britain. Exactly 950 of us viewed it at the London Film Festival last year. That's several hundred fewer than those who have been fulminating against the film ever being shown. I failed to spot Virginia Bottomley, Yusuf Islam or the leaders of Hull or Chester councils at the screening, though they are all among those encouraging the banning and boycotting of the film. And what of the much-quoted critic who labelled the film "beyond depravity"? He wasn't there because he doesn't exist. No critic ever used this phrase. It appeared in a newspaper headline and the copyright belongs to the headline writer.

Crash is a minor movie but far

from being titillating or socially subversive, its sex scenes are cold and sterile, played out to a bleak and unheroic background atmosphere. The characters searching for thrills are sad and unfulfilled. I watched the film alongside its director, David Cronenberg, who stresses that the car crashes were "a metaphor for the collision of present technology and the human psyche".

Mind you, Cronenberg told me afterwards that psychotherapists in his home country, Canada, have now informed him that every week they get clients who do indeed experience sexual arousal from car crashes. This was news to him and, I suspect, not terribly helpful to his metaphor argument.

One of the most welcome sights at the *Evening Standard's* ballet and classical music awards ceremony



David Lister arts notebook

on Thursday was that of Viviana Durante on stage, even if just to present an award. The Royal Ballet's sensuous, ethereal and compelling principal artist has been notably absent from the company – on sabbatical for many months now. It turns out she is dividing her time between exercise classes to keep the balletic muscles in shape and voice

classes for her new non-balletic enthusiasm – acting. "But dancers do act, thank you very much," balletomanes will be huffing. And quite rightly. But as Viviana tells me, too many stage and film directors fail to acknowledge this fact and the crossover from dancing to acting rarely occurs. In her last season, Durante demonstrated in both

Anastasia and *The Sleeping Beauty* a dramatic prowess and sensibilities which had most critics reaching for superlatives. It would not surprise me at all if she turns out to be in the vanguard of cultural crossover.

Dame Muriel Spark said on receipt of the British Literature Prize on Wednesday that she

would be using her £30,000 award to buy "a lovely, new, suitable motorcar". But just what sort of vehicle does a novelist in her prime (she is 79) buy? The lovely, suitable motorcar that Dame Muriel wants turns out to be an Alfa Romeo. *The crime de la crime*, and exactly what Jean Brodie would have driven herself if she had had the chance.

If you blinked you will have missed it. But then perhaps you were intended to miss it. Labour's Jack Cunningham launched the party's strategy for cultural policy and the Arts last Tuesday. Barely a line appeared in a newspaper. There was no coverage on television. Tony Blair did not honour it with a single soundbite. The party released its Arts document on the first day of the campaign,

when it was inevitably elbowed out by other concerns.

It all sounds as if Labour wants to keep its strategy for cultural policy deady quiet. If so, it's a pity. The document is somewhat lacking in *The Big Idea* but it's not short on initiatives that might actually help both artists and attenders of arts events. It contains a commitment to an Arts Card for 16- to 19-year-olds guaranteeing concessionary admission prices; pay-what-you-can nights for all ages at theatres on Monday nights, and the much heralded Nesta, the national endowment whereby wealthy stars and inventors leave some of their copyrights and patents to fund future generations of young artists and scientists. So my first question to Mr Blair in the TV debate would be: "Why did you want to hush it all up?"

arts & books

The consolations of philosophy

OPERA Haydn's *Orfeo* Queen Elizabeth Hall, SBC, London

Imagine the legal furore if a promoter scuppered an Andrew Lloyd Weber or Harrison Birtwistle stage commission after the composer had completed his side of the bargain. Haydn apparently suffered a similar fate with precious little fuss, moving straight on to composing his first set of "London" symphonies. For, although his *L'anno del filosofo* (The Spirit of the Philosopher), commonly known by its alternative title of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, was completed early in 1791, it had to wait until the 1951 Maggio Musicale in Florence for its stage premiere, in a production starring Maria Callas and Boris Christoff.

Thursday's concert performance, part of the London Philharmonic's ongoing Haydn Festival, proved the outstanding musical worth of Haydn's *Orfeo*, while highlighting its dramatic shortcomings. Cast, conductor and band can hardly be held responsible, however, for the acrobatics applied to the Orpheus myth (familiar from the works of Monteverdi and Gluck) by Haydn's librettist, Badini. Halfway through, a slyly tells the legendary singer that his only hope of restoring Eurydice to life is to trust in the power of philosophy, a proven shield against the torments of Hades. Haydn rescues the scene with a beguiling coloratura aria that makes the strongest possible case for the consolation of philosophy, delivered here by Claron McFadden with abundant personality and the confidence of complete technical surety. I could have done without the distant accompaniment of steam-hammers at work in Act 3, perhaps preparing the way for Orpheus' descent to the Underworld (but, more prosaically, part of the Jubilee Line extension).

Frieder Bernius, not the most gainly of baton-wielders but one with a convincing grasp of the score, extracted

stylish if not blemish free playing from a chamber-sized LPO and alert contributions from London Voices, above all highlighting the work's colour and the splendour of Haydn's choral writing. At times Bernius pressed ahead without the unanimous support of his singers, sweeping Eurydice along in her first aria, undermining its tenderness and testing Christiane Oelze's otherwise immaculate coloratura to the limits. Although lacking the mezzo qualities necessary to enrich the lower reaches of her music, Oelze balanced the vocal equation with radiant, beautifully shaded singing above the stage and a profoundly moving *mezzo* voice treatment of the heroine's departing aria.

Orpheus' response to Eurydice's death summoned a wonderfully refined demonstration of *bel canto* from Kurt Streit, who husbanded the resources of his voice to reveal its winning qualities of projection and unmanipulated expression. His natural legato and breath control were in place for his demanding first aria, "Rendete a questo seno", with *mezzo di voce* shading and clear diction adding to its sheer seductiveness.

The role of Creonte, well enough sung by William Dazeley, calls out for a greater degree of emotional involvement than it received here, not of the woe-is-me variety but certainly more compassionate in kind; likewise, the entire cast, with the exception of McFadden, appeared unwilling to complement their fine singing with simple physical gestures, sideways glances or even the slightest hint that Haydn's work was intended for the stage and not the concert hall.

Repeat performance: 7pm Tuesday QEH, SBC, London SE1 (0171-960 4242)

Andrew Stewart

Here's metal more attractive

The Danes take their arts so seriously they've put a couple of English women in charge. Malcolm Hayes meets the new brooms sweeping away at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre

Two English women running the national opera and ballet companies? It couldn't happen here, could it? Well, no, it probably couldn't. But it's happened in Denmark. Which raises another question. What does Denmark have to offer Elaine Padmore and Maina Gielgud - directors respectively of the Royal Danish Opera and the Royal Danish Ballet - that Britain seems not to? I went to Copenhagen to ask them.

Elaine Padmore's credentials as one of opera administration's hottest properties owe a lot to her work outside her native shores. Her 13 years as artistic director of the Wexford Festival in the Irish Republic substantially developed its reputation for shrewdly chosen repertoire and skilful casting on a tight budget. Padmore combined her Wexford post at first with that of head of opera for the BBC (where studio performances of works as elaborate and obscure as Haverhill Brian's *The Tigers* took place under her aegis). Later she was also artistic director of Dublin Grand Opera.

Then, in 1991, a telephone call from Copenhagen floated the possibility of her becoming artistic director of Denmark's national opera company. This shares the city's beautiful and much-cherished Royal Theatre with the Royal Danish Ballet and the Drama Department. (The tradition of opera, ballet and straight theatre co-existing under one roof is a time-honoured Scandinavian speciality.)

"It had been decided that the Opera needed 'sorting out'," says Padmore. "Here was a long-established company - performing almost everything in Danish, because that was what had always been done - which had got itself into a bit of a time-warped. They also felt that it would be less difficult for a foreigner to make changes than for someone who was Danish."

And what did she inherit when she started the job in 1993? "Essentially, the good and not-so-good aspects of what's meant by an opera company." Such as? The same singer, perhaps, singing the same role season after season, while heading relentlessly towards (or past) his or her sell-by date? "Exactly. There was a certain amount of that. But with almost everything being performed in Danish, it was bound to happen. The best side of a company structure is the collective spirit, and the sense of involve-



Top girls Elaine Padmore and Maina Gielgud; and a scene from the Royal Danish Opera staging of 'Karmeliterindes Samtaler' (aka Poulenc's 'Les dialogues des Carmélites') © MARTIN NYSTROM RONNE / PAL

ment that goes with it. I've been trying to develop this. And at the same time to work beyond certain situations that have persisted longer than they should.

"There is a Danish repertoire, although it's small." One example being *Drot og Marsk* (King and Marshal) by Peter Heise, regarded by aficionados as Danish opera's major 19th-century achievement, and currently being staged in London by University College Opera. "And it will always make sense here to do a comic opera like *The Magic Flute* in Danish. But, in the age of subtitles, it has to be right to do most things in their original language."

There are advantages for the company both ways: we can more easily bring in guest artists if we want to; and, if the young Danish singers we're bringing on here are to get the best opportunities abroad, it's much better for them to learn their roles in the original languages from the start."

To judge from the impressive performance I saw of the Pythonesque *Karmeliterindes Samtaler*, in Denmark's first staging of *Les dialogues des Carmélites*, Padmore convincingly practises what she preaches. Poulenc's magnificent group-portrait of a Carmelite convent caught up in the French Revolution was a gift firmly grasped by the company's female contingent (only fair, since Wagner's *Meistersinger* earlier in

the year had given all the limelight to the men). Everyone's French sounded (mostly) not too bad. And Padmore's ideas about casting were deftly vindicated by top-flight performances, in the leading roles of *Blanche* and *Sister Constance*, from Catherine Dubosc (French) and Inger-Dam Jensen (Danish, 1993 Cardiff Singer of the World, and a deservedly much-admired local heroine).

Carmelites was conducted by Jan Latham-Koenig, who had earlier been putting to me about the quality of the Royal Danish Orchestra (which, Vienna Philharmonic-style, also plays orchestral concerts). "They'd hardly done any French repertoire like this before," Poulenc needs a particular kind of sound - soft-grained, especially the strings. Getting them to do this took a while to start with, but they're very responsive." And how has the opera gone down locally? "Well, there's still one critic who noted that it wasn't being done in Danish, and wondered why not. But Elaine takes that kind of thing in her stride."

While the opera company's stock has been steadily rising since Padmore's arrival, the world-famous Royal Danish Ballet has been going through a period of administrative instability, summed up by the arrival and departure in rapid succession of two artistic directors. Cue Maina Gielgud, who this month takes over after 14 years at the helm of the Australian Ballet. While keenly aware of the importance of her new company's tradition, particularly its home-grown Bournonville repertoire, Gielgud, too, believes in the benefits of developing a more international outlook.

"There's a lot of talent here," she says. "And I want to try to bring it on with a policy of guest exchanges with other companies. The tradition of guesting is much better established in opera than in ballet, and I think we can learn from that." So a period of

time spent working in different surroundings will benefit a dancer nine times out of 10? "Oh, I'd say 10 times out of 10. As a minimum!"

The cultural climate within which Padmore and Gielgud are operating emphasises just how different the tone of life in 1990s Britain is from that in Denmark, with its apparently happy and secure balance between a liked and respected monarchy and a broad political background of social democratic consensus. True, there's the odd spicy Danish diversion such as rival gangs of Hell's Angels attacking each other with rocket-propelled grenades. But it'll take rather more than this recent and widely reported incident to destabilise the Danish instinct for liking life, and liking things like opera and ballet that are perceived to be part of it.

Maina Gielgud puts it in a nutshell. "The Royal Danish Ballet is very important to the people of Denmark. It's seen as a national asset, and they expect to see it thriving." It's a view confirmed by Elaine Padmore's impressions of life at the head of the opera company (to which, would-be headhunters please note, she's committed until the year 2000).

"A few years ago, it was decided that trying to juggle the repertoires of the opera and the ballet and the theatre within one building had become too much of a log-jam. So this new performing space was built next door for the theatre company. Now it's being suggested that this might after all be a better home for the opera." And feelings have been running high? "Certainly. But about how best to deploy the resources of the three companies. Not about whether they should or shouldn't exist in the first place."

Heise's *Drot og Marsk*: 7.15pm tonight, Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St, London WC1 (0171-388 8822)

David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW		GERAINT LEWIS	AUGUST SANDER ARCHIVE	
	THE FILM	THE PLAY	THE EXHIBITION	THE JAZZ CONCERT
	Star Wars: Special Edition	The Importance of Being Oscar	August Sander	Wynton Marsalis
overview	The film that launched a thousand imitations, made producer George Lucas a player, made Harrison Ford a star and settled Alec Guinness's pension, is back in a massively hyped new edition, is slightly retouched with computer-generated extras, which took \$22m in its opening week in the US. Cert U, on every available cinema screen.	Simon Callow performs Michael MacLiammair's solo show based on the life and writings of Oscar Wilde. Excerpts include <i>Salome</i> , <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> , <i>Dorian Gray</i> , <i>De Profundis</i> and <i>The Ballad of Reading Gaol</i> on a suitably ornate set by Christopher Woods lit by Nick Richings. <i>The Savoy Theatre</i> , London W1 (0171-836 8888)	150 photographs from the documentary series, "People of the 20th Century", the key work of the influential photographer (1876-1964) whose career was ruined by the Nazis, plus landscapes and flower studies and pictures of bombed Cologne, in which much of his early work was destroyed. National Portrait Gallery (0171-306 0055) to 8 June.	Wynton Marsalis performed his 1994 work <i>Blood on the Fields</i> , a three-hour jazz oratorio on the history of slavery, for which he wrote both the music and the libretto with his Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra and the three class A vocalists: Jon Hendricks, Miles Griffith and Cassandra Wilson. The final concert in the European tour.
critical view	Adam Mars-Jones raised an eyebrow at "the same old movie with an upgraded subwoofer boom track, new laser ricochets and a special bonus giant slug that talks". "A landmark film. But what it commemorates is baleful ... the beginning of Hollywood's descent into infantilism," groaned the <i>Standard</i> . "None of the new bits contributes anything in narrative terms but, mostly, the result is stunning," nodded <i>Time Out</i> . "The value of those extra four minutes lies far more in their use as a marketing hook than in any artistic achievement," asserted <i>The Times</i> . "Keep watching - it looks as if we will have to - this Space," sighed the <i>FT</i> .	Paul Taylor described a missed opportunity but found it "genial, witty, sometimes pleasingly hammy, and often moving." "As outrageous, as generous, and as touching as Wilde himself," recommended <i>The Telegraph</i> . "A well-tuned essay being delivered with panache ... two of the most moving passages you're likely to find on any London stage," saluted the <i>Mail</i> . "Exemplary: unsentimental, lucid, lively, absorbing," admired <i>The Times</i> . "Witty, beautiful, compelling stuff," declared the <i>FT</i> . "A highly impressive performance ... induced an enraptured attention," purred <i>The Guardian</i> . "Inadequate ... affected, self-conscious pomp," snorted the <i>Standard</i> .	Tom Lubbock did not mince his words: "I think he may be simply the best photographer ever ... Everything stands out, to imply, somewhere in there, a soul that finds itself so strangely in this actual, historical, undeniable self." "The world of his photographs is gravid with foreboding, and the future that his subjects can't foresee looms over them like a storm cloud," marvelled <i>The Telegraph</i> . "His forte lay in the steady gaze ... the possibilities he opened up for an art rooted in tough yet humane social observation are still being explored by photographers today," averred <i>The Times</i> .	Phil Johnson, a serious fan of the work, was disappointed. "Uncomfortably like watching a rehearsal ... there was some incredible music but ... having failed to establish a stage presence at the beginning, the show struggled to capture the hearts of an audience who were just waiting to be invited inside." "This was Marsalis both delighting his admirers and resoundingly confounding his detractors, including this one ... the best orchestral writing he has ever done," wondered <i>The Guardian</i> . "We drifted out into the streets exhausted but exhilarated ... originality, grace and unexpected humour ... superlative performances," roared <i>The Times</i> .
our view	See it on the big screen, if only for Carrie Fisher's Danish pastry-headphone hairdo.	A supremely elegant, thoughtful evening, but don't expect any kind of Nineties take on the material.	A striking show which should properly establish him as one of the camera's true greats.	Great music, poor concert. Buy the Sorry album which comes out next month.

The pleasures of deviation

DANCE Bound to Please Arts Theatre, Cambridge

Lloyd Newson's work for DV8 is complex at the best of times. In *Bound to Please* he has deliberately set out to avoid traditional theatrical pleasures like exposition and resolution in favour of a rich, multi-layered approach to his subject. And your chosen subject is dance as a metaphor for the elimination of individuality. You have 70 minutes starting from ... Now.

We open with the 67-year-old Diana Payne-Myers in black practice clothes before a wall of mirrors gliding by on the stage-revolve to the tinkling strains of a musical box. Behind her, glimpsed through a narrow doorway, a party of young ravens twitch and strut within a movement system as coded and uniform as a ballet. Ian MacNeil's ingenious set rotates as the scene changes, the walls folding and unfolding on their axis to create discrete spaces that make brilliant use of the small stage.

The disco dancers, already counting beneath their breath, metamorphose into solitary waltzers and twirl dreamily through the room until put off their stroke by Wendy Houston, who passes among them disrupting the tidy rhythm of their dance. Back at the dance studio, neatly tricked out in black leotards, the company's eight dancers, led by Robert Tannion, go through daily class. "Right, left, right, left,

right, right" intones Tannion briskly. "Wrong," mutters Wendy Houston, who then asks the unthinkable: "Why are we going to do this anyway?" "I'm just trying to get everyone to be the same," Tannion replies, evenly. That does it. Exasperated by the tidiness of it all, she sneaks around the studio pushing dancers off-balance.

Although scarcely a narrative work, *Bound to Please* definitely has a heroine in Houston. Naughty, unconventional and disobedient, she subverts any attempt to sand down the rough edges of her personality. She may obligingly perform an arabesque, then pull down her pants and begin scratching her bum. But the pressure to conform prettily proves too much even for her. "Good Wendy," she says to herself, after completing a dizzy series of fouettés, and slips tragically into the value system that she has hitherto despised.

Once outside the shell of the room, the dancers reveal their other faces: Wendy Houston secretly practises her arabesque on the roof; Diana Payne-Myers and her young lover embrace in a narrow corridor. Lloyd Newson is alarmed at dance's insistence on youth and beauty, and his use of Diana Payne-Myers's emaciated naked body is unquestionably a valid challenge to our assumptions about what dancers are supposed to

look like. I have to say, however, that I have never seen a naked 67-year-old washing their armpits in a bucket before and that I am in no particular hurry to repeat the experience. It isn't a matter of age - I have enough trouble with Javier de Frutos. I can't help finding audacity a distraction: my mind wanders and I start thinking about signing up for a gym or getting a lock for the bathroom door.

By the closing sequence, we are back in the never-never land of unison with four dancers doing a cheesy little routine of leaps and battements against a Rosenthal blue backdrop to music that slyly parodies the banal minimalism so much in vogue. Their Prozac smiles stretch from ear to ear as they deliver a seamless stream of choreographic junk. It's a set-up, of course - unison wouldn't be worthwhile if it were always as bad as Newson's satire suggests - but the point is splendidly made. In conclusion, Diana Payne-Myers stands before a mirror only to see her reflection disappear: try too hard to please and you lose your very soul.

To See: Arts Theatre, Cambridge (01223 503333); 2-3 April, Swan, High Wycombe (01494 512000); 10-12 April, Tramway, Glasgow (0141-287 3900); and touring

Louise Levene

Steaming back to happiness

'The Railway Children' is back. Put out your flags, bring out your handkerchiefs and salute a landmark in British film-making. By David Benedict

Oakworth station. Oakworth station. Oakworth station. Cribbins as the 11.54 steams in. Jenny Agutter, in navy coat and beret, stands on the platform as the few passengers alight from the train and all the naturalistic sounds fade from the soundtrack, to be replaced by the eerily ringing tone of a finger rimming a wine glass. As the train pulls out, the screen fills with steam but the camera keeps cutting back to Agutter's puzzled, expectant face. As the steam clears, Iain Cuthbertson is seen standing at the far end of the platform. A distant piano plays the opening bars of the theme tune and suddenly Agutter sees him. Arms outstretched, she rushes towards the camera and Cuthbertson. Her defiant voice echoing round the empty station; she cries out the most emotionally charged line in British cinema. "Daddy, my Daddy!" She flies to him in long shot, the camera cuts to ground level and we see her feet lift off the platform as she hurls herself into her father's arms.

If you were of cinema-going age in 1970 or beyond, the chances are you know this scene by heart. Lionel Jeffries' film version of E Nesbit's 1906 novel about Roberta ("the eldest, called Bobbie"), Pete (who wanted to be an engineer) and Phyllis ("who meant well") was an unprecedented success. At the Royal premiere, the entire audience cheered and gave it a standing ovation. Bernard Delfont turned to Jeffries's wife and said: "Lionel's got you an insurance policy for life."

Lionel's got you an insurance policy for life

News that the BFI had a new print struck and that the restored film is going on a nationwide release may come as a relief to adults anxious to amuse children over the Easter holidays, but has caused consternation among those who take their cinema very seriously indeed. Sight and

Sound, the cineastes' bible, will not be featuring it. One suspects they will be a little less snooty when Hitchcock's *Vertigo* is re-released next month. Yet, even those allergic to *The Railway Children's* carefully constructed naivety and period charm should look at it in context. The beginning of the Seventies was the beginning of the end for British film. The number of cinemas was less than half what it had been 10 years earlier and attendances were plummeting by around 25 million every year. Even if you personally dislike *The Railway Children*, it looks like an unmissable giant in comparison with the utterly forgettable fodder that Britain produced that year: the drabness of sex comedies like *Twinky* with Susan George, ghostly versions of stage hits like *Loot* and *Spring and Port Wine* (Susan George again... why?) or vastly over inflated trifles like *Goodbye Mr Chips* and *David Lean's* disastrous flop *Ryan's Daughter*, which was budgeted around the \$20m mark. *The Railway Children*, the first film out of the EMI Elstree studio under Bryan Forbes, its new head of production, cost just £300,000, which it recouped on its first release, then (as now) a rarity in British cinema. Not merely a parochial success, it opened in the States on the huge screen of Radio City. *Life* magazine hailed it as the best family film since *Meet Me in St Louis* a quarter of a century before.

Not until *ET*, 12 years later, did another children's film have a similarly emotional effect with performances and key sequences burnt into the memory of an entire generation. British cinema has never managed to repeat the trick. EMI tried in 1974 with *Swallows and Amazons* but, as Ken Russell remarked, "I have never read the Arthur Ransome classic, but if it is as dull as the film, I doubt I ever will." Stuart Orme's 1988 film of Joan Aiken's classic *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* has an excellent



score by Colin Towns plus a thrillingly camp Stephanie Beacham as wicked Governess Letitia Slighcarp but despite sharing its missing parent plot, it cannot compete with Lionel Jeffries's loving rendering of E Nesbit's masterpiece – a volume which he came across, literally, by accident.

"I was returning to England from America to play Grandpa in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*," Jeffries recalls, "when the train was derailed in Chicago." By the time he and his family were on board ship for the final leg of the journey, he realised that all his books were lost, but his daughters Martha and Elizabeth happened to be carrying a copy of Nesbit's book which, upon their instruction, he read and fell in love with. "As soon as I got home, I bought a six-month option on it for £300, sat down and began to write the screenplay." Trying to sell it was much tougher. MGM were interested but only if he relocated it to America and turned it into a musical with Julie Andrews. Nobody would touch a faithful

screen version of a period children's film, until he sent it to his old friend, Bryan Forbes, at Elstree. It was Forbes who persuaded Jeffries to direct it. "He said, 'You know you can handle people from your war experience; you paint, which proves you can handle visuals; and you've acted in 100-odd films'." In fact, Jeffries had learnt about direction at the age of six when his father bought a camera and projector in 1926. "He did storyboards. I learnt about editing, how you match left and right on the return shot, the lot. Later, whenever I was acting in a film, I'd follow the special effects crew around or watch the lighting cameraman to see why the camera was in certain positions." Forbes gave him *carne blanche* and, together with producer Robert Lynn, he assembled his crew and set about casting.

Dinah Sheridan agreed to play the mother and at a meeting at Mayfair's White Elephant club she asked, "Have you got the children yet?" Lynn leant over to Jeffries and said, "Look at the person in the

next booth." There sat Jenny Agutter, an actress since her schooldays – not only on film, but in the TV version of *The Railway Children*. Sally Thomsett and Gary Warren were found through the more traditional route of auditions.

Warren, now a furrier in Canada, appears to have separated himself from this childhood endeavour, but everyone else is happy to talk about the experience, which they all recall with unaffected pleasure. Thanks to tall co-stars, flat shoes and the voluminous cut of her pinafore dress, Thomsett, then 20 years old, merrily played a character half her age. "I had a boyfriend and a new Lotus Elite sports car that I was dying to get my mitts on," giggles Thomsett who, like Agutter, a shade younger, was forbidden to go to the pub during the shoot. The two of them drove

into Leeds one night to go dancing. When they returned, they were met by a furious Lionel Jeffries, who gave them a serious dressing-down.

Twenty-seven years later, Agutter, who identified strongly with the character of Roberta, the serious girl on the verge of adulthood, is setting up a film based on Nesbit's life. Back then, she had already starred in Nicolas Roeg's atmospheric aboriginal encounter, *Walkabout* (although that film was not released until after *The Railway Children*). "It was strange doing them back to

back, one all about innocence and the other all about loss of innocence," she muses, her low, carefully articulated, pale voice still betraying the distant, uninflected restraint which made her the unexpected sex symbol for a generation. That restraint is the hallmark of the film. "We never approached it as a

'The Railway Children' made Jenny Agutter the unexpected sex symbol of a generation and takes us back to an age of vanished English innocence

children's film," declares Jeffries. "The mail we received from adults was incredible." He ascribes that to the decision to hold the reins on the emotions. Nesbit's own father died when she was three, the pain of which she returned to again and again in her writing but nowhere so directly as here. There is a comic veneer to the film version which rarely oversteps the mark, as in Perks's birthday party, but its dramatic resonance stems from the loss the children suffer with their father's abrupt disappearance and the fulfilment of their hopes when he returns. Wisely, Jeffries never shows the children crying, but when Roberta accidentally discovers a cutting about their father's imprisonment, Jeffries shot raindrops landing on the newspaper to evoke that response in the viewer.

Alongside its historical importance, it's the film's unique charge that persuaded the BFI's Robin Barker to re-release it. He acknowledges the current nostalgia-boom dreamed up by media thrillsome-things busily re-packaging their childhood, but refutes the charge of opportunism. "I think it's damn good. No other children's film has that emotional impact." His favourite scene is Roberta's birthday party. "The whole room is decked out and she appears simply to float across it. They recorded the music before shooting and it was completely choreographed to Johnny Douglas's score. I always cry at that scene." He's not alone. Noel Coward told Forbes it was his favourite film of all time and Gielgud poked Jeffries in the back at an early screening and said, "You've made me cry, you bugger."

Nesbit's story basks in innocence recaptured. Short of long-winded, expensive therapy, we cannot return to our childhood but a trip to the cinema next week may well be the next best thing.

Charity screening in aid of the National Children's Home at the Barbican, London, EC1 on 26 Mar. Tickets from Julia Hughes (0171-255 1444). *The Railway Children* opens on 28 Mar with a nationwide release on 4 Apr.

Every cloud has a sexual lining

Paul Taylor inspects revivals of two plays that were scandals in their day

THEATRE Cloud Nine, Old Vic / Misalliance, Birmingham Rep

It is no disrespect to Caryl Churchill's 1979 play *Cloud Nine* to say that it now has the air of a period piece, for as Tom Cairns's splendidly acted and designed revival at the Old Vic establishes, this work may be of an era but its provocativeness is not past its sell-by date.

The weird form of the play reflects the intuitive sense many people have that our libidinal development as individuals follows much the same route as our recent collective history. We start out as repressed, guilty, ill-informed Victorians; sexual intercourse, with apologies to Larkin, eternally begins in some platonic version of 1963; and only by painful degrees do we become liberated Seventies erotic experimenters.

Also evocative of the parallel between colonial and sexual oppression, the first act is set among Victorian imperialists in darkest Africa, the second in late 1970s London. Between times, a century has elapsed, but the characters have only aged by 25 years. With figures from the 19th-century world making brief, spectral visits to the park where most of the

second half takes place, the play demonstrates that these people are our psychological inheritance. It celebrates the capacity for change, but it does not pretend that the past can be thrown off lightly.

There's a marked difference of tone between the acts, expertly handled here by Cairns and his crack cast. Representing colonial Africa with a beautiful surrealism (a massive ivory tusk rears up, for example, as though it had just gored through the wall), the design offers an ideal background for the coarse cartoon exuberance of the Victorian scenes where we see that it is not just the natives who are restless nor merely the white man's bearing which is erect. Libidos run rampant as the lesbian governess years for the administrator's wife who is justing for his best friend who, in turn, is interfering with his young son and having sex in the stables with his black servant.

To underline that the patriarchal relationships passed off as "natural" are arbitrary and changeable, Churchill stipulates purposefully perverse casting (the black servant is played by a white; the little son by a woman et cetera, et cetera –

if Queen Victoria herself were to arrive, performed by a gay, disabled gerbil, you wouldn't turn a hair). For the more serious second half, the parts are re-assigned, always with some thematic point. For example, the excellent Dominic West, all shy sad girlishness and underlying frustration as Betty, the wife of Tim McInnerny's administrator, re-appears in the Seventies as her now grown-up gay son Edward. This young man's suffocating desire to adopt the traditional "female" role in a relationship has alienated his promiscuous lover. Because of the casting, you can see his mother in Edward in a very special sense and this brings home the fact that he gained his stereotyped, soon-to-be exploded view of women from her.

With Edward entering into a polymorphous *ménage à trois* with his sister and her lesbian lover, and with a divorced Betty, now played by an extremely moving Janine Duvitski, rediscovering selfhood through the delights of masturbation, the second half of *Cloud Nine* can sometimes seem as artificial and engineered as the first. And with 1979 now so far in the past that

there will be women voting in this election who weren't born when Churchill wrote the play, you feel that it could stand some of the deconstructive brio she brings to the colonial era. But this play about liberation and its distinction from liberation-in-the-head (Andrew Woodall's Martin is an amusingly concealed example of the latter) still comes over as genuinely liberating.

"Men like conventions because men made them. I didn't make them. I don't like them. I won't keep them. Now, what will you do?" No, not a speech from *Cloud Nine*, but from *Misalliance*, a 1910 play by Shaw, revived now in Birmingham by Caroline Eves, which also examines the arbitrariness of much of what we consider natural in sexual politics. One of its characters, for example, says that if marriages were made by getting a blindfolded child to draw out names from a sack "there would be just as high a percentage of happy marriages as we have here in England".

A Polish female acrobat steps out of the aeroplane that crashes through the conservatory roof of a Surrey mansion and demands six oranges and a copy of the Bible; a



Tim McInnerny and Marion Bailey in the still-liberating 'Cloud Nine'

PHOTOGRAPH BY GERRAINT LEWIS

timid would-be anarchist emerges from his hiding-place in a portable Turkish bath and pulls a gun on the resident millionaire. It would be easy from such details to give the impression that *Misalliance* is more experimental and proto-Absurdist than it is in fact the case. True, the Polish lady acrobat, played with swaggering sang-froid by Abigail Thaw, is a calculated affront to Edwardian notions of femininity. Betty in *Cloud Nine* is scandalised when reminded that

she has legs under her dress. So you can appreciate the shock value of Shaw's heroine who, all cool self-sufficiency, stalks about in a leather flying-suit Emma Peel might have envied.

But, despite this *deus ex machina* "man-woman, woman-man" and despite some nice performances (especially from Paul Humpoletz as the forthright, ridiculously well-read underwear tycoon), Eves cannot disguise the fact that this is a "dream play" only in theory and

for long stretches it is indistinguishable from a garrulous drawing-room comedy. There are one or two gems, though, in the endless jabber, as when the anarchist declares with sublime bathos that "Rome fell. Babylon fell. Hind-head's turn will come."

Cloud Nine, Old Vic, London, SE1 (0171-928 7616) in rep 26 April; *Misalliance*, Birmingham Rep (0121-236 4455) to 5 April. Paul Taylor



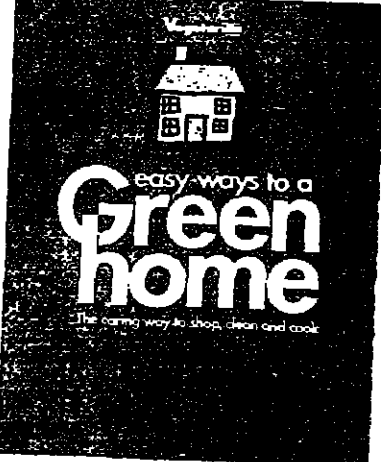
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In-jokes and out-takes

Sean French maps the private world of a poetic powerhouse

Prose 1926-1938: Essays, Reviews and Travel Books in prose and verse by W H Auden, edited by Edward Mendelson, Faber, £40

Here is W H Auden writing in 1932, in an extract from a work that has appeared in no earlier collection of his poems:

It is going on.
It is going to be like this to-morrow.
Attendance-officers will fit from slum to slum.
Educational agencies will be besieged
By promising young men who have no inclination
To go into business.
Examiners chuckle over a novel setting of
The problem of Achilles and the Tortoise.
Fathers sell grand pianos or give up tobacco.
That little Adrian or Derek may go
To Marlborough or Stowe.

The Auden tone is unmistakable: the shift between incantatory repetition and conversational style, the eye for detail, the unexpected rhymes, above all the sheer oracular authority. The reason it has not appeared in collections of poetry is that it is not a poem. I have reset as verse a paragraph from a review by Auden of three books on education.

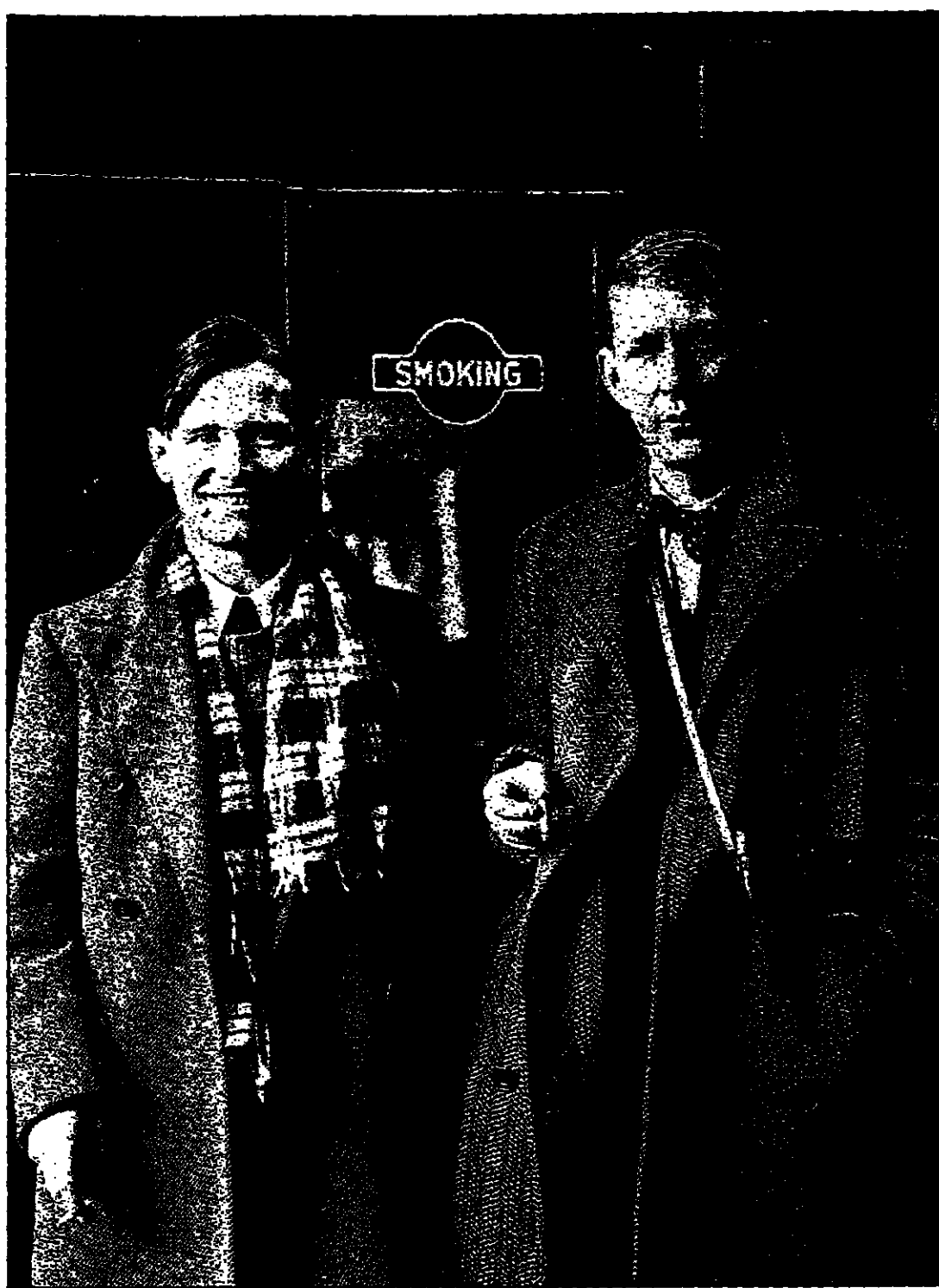
In this collection of prose, Auden quotes the definition of poetry as "memorable speech". It was a gift he possessed to an almost miraculous degree. Think of his gift for lapel-grabbing openings. It's everywhere. In his first poems, rejected by T S Eliot as poetry editor at Faber and Faber, and never published, these lines appear: "We saw in Spring/The frozen buzzard/Flipped down the weir and carried out to sea." It's in the elegy made famous by *Four Weddings and a Funeral*: "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone," or in the opening of the great political poem, "Spain": "Yes-

terday all the past. The language of size/Spreading to China along the trade routes ..."

Auden's lyric impulse was so potent that it almost scared him. The main thing to be said about this outstanding collection of his prose is that it gives us a look around the engine room of Auden's imagination during its most brilliant decade. The range is bewildering, until you remember the variety of verse he was producing during the same period. There are book reviews, manifestos, introductions to anthologies, a pamphlet about educational theory, a history of writing for children, an essay about the relationship between Freudian psychology and art, and of course the two collaborative travel books, *Letters from Iceland* (with Louis MacNeice) and *Journey to a War* (with Christopher Isherwood).

The editor, Edward Mendelson, (who is Auden's literary executor) has rightly included everything, so the variation in quality is great. There are a couple of truly dismal attempts at round-ups of crime fiction for the *Daily Telegraph*, but then, 100 pages later, they inspire the brilliant poem in *Letters from Iceland* about why people read detective stories. In his own poetry, Auden was breaking down barriers between the classic and modern, the poetic and prosaic, the private and public, political and lyrical. We follow the same process in these essays. He has an eerie gift for adopting different styles, using jargon, adopting, or sometimes just striking, attitudes. Yet tortuous, contradictory, callow though some

'Auden's lyric impulse was so potent that it almost scared him'



Fags on board: Christopher Isherwood and W H Auden set off for China in 1938

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of his hastily constructed arguments may have been, Auden was in tune with his decade. One of his large themes that recurs through the essays is a preoccupation with the dangers of hero-worship, both to the followers and to the leader himself.

It was an argument that concerned both the political currents of the Thirties and Auden's own status as a poetic spokesman. This larger dread fed into his poetry and gave an unmistakable charge to his personal mythology of frontiers, spies and tribal betrayals.

Much of this book may seem familiar, consisting as it does of the already available travel books. But they gain considerable interest from being published in their first editions, and for fans of Auden and MacNeice's famous parodic *Last*

Will and Testament, the book will almost be worth its price for the awesomely authoritative, and very funny, notes by Mendelson and Auden's biographer, Richard Davenport-Hines. They explain the weird private jokes and personal references that make up that most Thirtiesish of Thirties works.

It was often assumed by disapproving critics that Auden's poetry was a private, possibly homosexual, joke shared between him and his coterie. What Mendelson and Davenport-Hines have shown is that Auden's friends were as baffled as everybody else. Take the following "bequest": "I leave the wheel at Laxey, Isle of Man, / To Sean Day-Lewis."

This is the world's largest water-wheel: a joking reference (so the editors have now established by

consulting Sean Day-Lewis) to the five-year-old boy's bedwetting problem for which Auden's father, a doctor, was approached. As with Auden's major poem, "The Orators" - which depends integrally on a paper only published in the journal of the Anthropological Institute - the sense of exclusion is itself the meaning. Not quite getting the point was part of the point.

There will be more urbane, entertaining essays in later volumes by the American Auden, more interested in literature for its own sake. What later essays lose is the sense of impending crisis, of something terrible about to happen, that haunted everything he wrote in the Thirties. When, in September 1939, the terrible thing did happen, Auden would never be quite the same writer, or man, again.

Up to a point, Sir Kingsley

Jonathan Keates applauds a last act of faith in good writing

The King's English: a guide to modern usage by Kingsley Amis, HarperCollins, £16.99

For that swarm of professional croakers who warn us of the nation's collapse in a welter of godlessness and relativism, few things hint more balefully at impending Armageddon than the decline of "good English". The demise of Latin teaching, the "real books" method of learning to read, and the Church of England's rejection of the Prayer Book and the Authorised Version have been variously blamed for this, as has the belief that anything written before 1900 must by its very nature be elitist and the idea that computers will somehow overwhelm the printed word.

None of these bugbears is without substance, but their credibility is diminished by the sense that the person parading them so hysterically is just another pig-ignorant journo unconcerned with establishing a link between cause and effect.

The appearance of a book by the late Sir Kingsley Amis, borrowing the title of the Fowler brothers' famous volume of 1906, might seem to the croakers like an ammunition-drop among beleaguered guerrillas. Amis is, after all, "sustained by reflecting that the defence of the language is too large a matter to be left to the property qualified". In this amateur capacity, he feels just as much entitled to wage war as any lexicographer.

As it happens, *The King's English* (no feminist faffing about with the royal possessive, please note) is far from being a posthumous saturation-bombardment. The tone is reasonable, urbane, the voice not of the sozzled curmudgeon interviewers liked to evoke, but of a widely read university tutor without chips on the shoulder or axes to grind. Amis is resoundingly opinionated yet never so dogmatic as to reject the protean aspects of language.

He is, however, too emphatically his own man for this to be a mere style manual. What emerges is a trenchant yet entertaining commonplace book. It ranges over everything from meaning and taxonomy to quirks of fashion and shifts in pronunciation. At no point does he unconditionally demand compliance. It is the sense of

English as his personal enthusiasm which makes us feel that resistance to his point of view must, in the end, appear as simple rudeness.

Respect, if not absolute concurrence, is due to his emphasis on the increasing value - in a media-driven age - of making a moral distinction between speaking and writing. Talking of "due to", his verdict on its hoary old Manichean struggle with "owing to" is equally worth attention. Decorum is the arbiter: the ears become "organs of grammatical fitness" and the rule that subordinates "due" to "owing" is "worth following for its own sake, not just in deference to the fact that elderly persons happen to know about it".

Are you a berk or a wanker? Under the former heading, Amis laments those whose intruded glottal stops and grammatical solecisms suffocate English with impurity, a kind of linguistic pollution. Just as poisonous are the wankers, "prissy, fussy, priggish, prim", who kill by hyper-precision. Kingsley's is the *via media* between slipshod and punctilious, as he falls like a thunderbolt on the ersatz-posh "hyper-urbanism" of "between you and I", on dangling participles or the abuse of "Up to a point, Lord Copper".

On pronunciation he is pragmatic, or at any rate imbued with an old man's resignation. Girls have long since ceased to behave as gels, though "reckonise" and "seckatry" still course with unhealthy vigour. Now and then he loses the point. The section on "because" is delphic in its opacity. There is no excuse for misapplying "cobort" to mean "handyman", and "fine toothcomb", whatever he may claim as to the availability of such an article in prewar shops, remains a ludicrous misreading of "fine-toothed comb". Such lapses merely sharpen the book's edge as a last act of faith in uncorrupted discourse.

As a teacher at the City of London School, where the boy Amis learnt his craft, I feel I have something to live up to. And if you're the sort who jibs at that final preposition, this book is definitely for you.

Independent choice: gardening

By Anna Pavord



It is much easier to write about the particular than the general, so all the more praise is due to May Woods for her wide-ranging *Visions of Arcadia* (Aurum, £25). Taking on the whole of western Europe, she traces the history of a certain kind of garden making, rooted in images of an idealised past, reinterpreted through the eyes of generations of garden makers in Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo modes.

It's a vast theme and she handles it well, showing how ideas - on garden-making as well as science and philosophy - moved over boundaries. It's a book about design rather than plants, essential reading for anyone heading this summer towards Italian gardens such as Villa d'Este - or to less well-known gardens such as Queluz, hidden away between Lisbon and Sintra. Ms Woods thinks it the greatest Rococo garden in Europe. I want to go there now. Started in 1746 by the Infante Dom Pedro III and decorated with more than 200 lead statues from John Cheere's workshop at Hyde Park Corner, it is a dreamy garden, its central canal lined with fabulous ceramic tiles.

The book is cleverly organised into chunks that are neither too big to digest nor too small to make you feel cheated of detail. The structure is chronological, moving from medieval gardens and the Renaissance to the wonderfully mad menageries, obelisks and ornamental dog kennels of the Rococo garden. "Every hovel for cows has bells hanging at the corners," wrote Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells to *The World* in March 1753.

Ms Woods highlights the great Renaissance contribution to garden

design: the unity of structural elements in a garden. She shows how, by choosing a gardener and engineer to advise him, not an architect, Charles VIII's French gardens never achieved the cohesion of their Italian counterparts. But what Charles lost on the vistas, he gained on the fountains. His hydraulics man, Fra Giocondo, was the best in Europe.

Classical Italy is a lost continent to most of us, but its history and heroes were familiar territory to the educated



Pick of the week
Visions of Arcadia by May Woods

garden-makers who inhabit the 350 years of May Woods's survey. The gardens they made were rich in symbolism and classical allusion, illuminated in this elegantly designed and illustrated book.

Easter traditionally marks the opening of the garden visiting season and your licence fee is £3.50, the cost of the new edition of the *Yellow Book* *Gardens of England and Wales Open for Charity*. It lists 3,500 gardens, grand multi-acred mansions, small groups of terraced houses, roof gardens, water gardens and vegetable gardens (my favourite). In London alone, there are 29 new gardens opening for the first time, including

the Chumleigh communal garden in Southwark, where you can see gardening in Oriental, African, Islamic and Caribbean styles.

Because the ratio of available weekends compared with gardens to visit is so unbalanced, you also need *The Good Gardens Guide 1997*, edited by Peter King (Ebury Press, £14.99). This is by far the best of the available guides, covering 1,000 of the best gardens in Britain and a few in Europe that are no more than a Shuttle-hop away. It caused a pleasant uproar when it first came out eight years ago because it graded gardens like restaurants and awarded stars to the best. A hundred gardens have the highest two-star rating, including Chatsworth (a thrilling garden at any time of the year) and Ard na Mona, County Donegal. For those who want to make a full weekend of it, there is a useful section on hotels with good gardens.

A lack of classical education may hinder our understanding of 18th-century gardens. It also makes us splutter over Latinised plant names. But the names are much easier to remember if you have some inkling what they mean. That is why I love Stearn's *Dictionary of Plant Names* (Cassell, £14.99). Now 86, the brilliantly erudite Professor William Stearn was an authority even by 1930 when he contributed to a session of the Nomenclature Section at the International Botanical Congress.

If, for instance, you have ever wondered about the meaning of *meleagris* (as in *Fritillaria meleagris*), look no further. It means "spotted like the guinea fowl". How exact. Forsythia, blooming now in a million spring gardens, is named after William Forsyth (1737-1804), the Scottish superintendent of the gardens at Kensington Palace. He invented a "plaster", a mixture of lime, dung, wood ashes, soapsuds and urine, for which he made extravagant, and very dubious claims. I've never much liked forsythia. I like it much more now because of the knaveish Forsyth.

Crossed in love

Rachel Billington sees sense triumph over sensibility

Obsessive Heart: Jane Austen, A Biography by Valerie Grosvenor Myer, Michael O'Mara Books, £18.99

Jane Austen died in 1817 at the age of 41. She died a spinster, not even enjoying the dignity of an engagement like her sister Cassandra, except once, farcically, over a 12-hour period, after which she fled the despised gentleman. She was well-born, even well-connected but poor - or at least less rich than she would have wished to be - all her life. With the exception of *Emma*, all her six novels are on the same theme: the search by impecunious young women for suitable husbands - for suitable, read rich. Yet she herself never achieved this aim.

At the end of her life, she wrote to her unmarried niece, Fanny Knight, "Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor - which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony". Valerie Grosvenor Myer has taken this as the theme for her biography, the first of three expected this year. The romantic sounding title *Obsessive Heart* refers to Jane Austen's determination to remain single despite all the advantages in taking the plunge.

Jane Austen's readers may be glad of this condition since it is unlikely that she would have produced any books at all if she had entered the strenuous service that marriage demanded like the guinea fowl. Five of her brothers produced between them 28 children and, at one point, every one of them was widowed, their wives worn out by childbearing. Four of them married again and two started further families.

Grosvenor Myer paints a portrait of Jane Austen as a dissatisfied, irritable woman who was trapped within a role that she bitterly resented. This crosspatch will not be recognised by those



Jane Austen: 'determined to remain single' HULTON GETTY

ally making do, kept her from her pen for many years. On her visits to the luxury of Edward's home, she exults, "I shall eat ice and drink French wine and be above vulgar economy".

That precious writing time came eventually when Edward established his mother and sisters in Chawton Cottage. After publication, she herself earned sums large enough to allow her the pleasure of shopping in London for spotted muslin and silk stockings. If she had lived, she could have looked forward to a happy and productive life. Jane Austen's real tragedy lies in her early death.

Obsessive Heart will provide any Austen fan with a mass of information about her day to day life. Valerie Grosvenor Myer stays very close to her subject, paying only nodding recognition to the events of the day. This allows her room to put in all kinds of fascinating details which a wider ranging book might excise. I was glad to know, for exam-

ple, that the Cotillions at the Bath Assembly Rooms were presided over by a French prisoner of war. More often the book is a record of births, deaths and visits, which, although sometimes repetitive, build up to an important record of Jane Austen's exterior life.

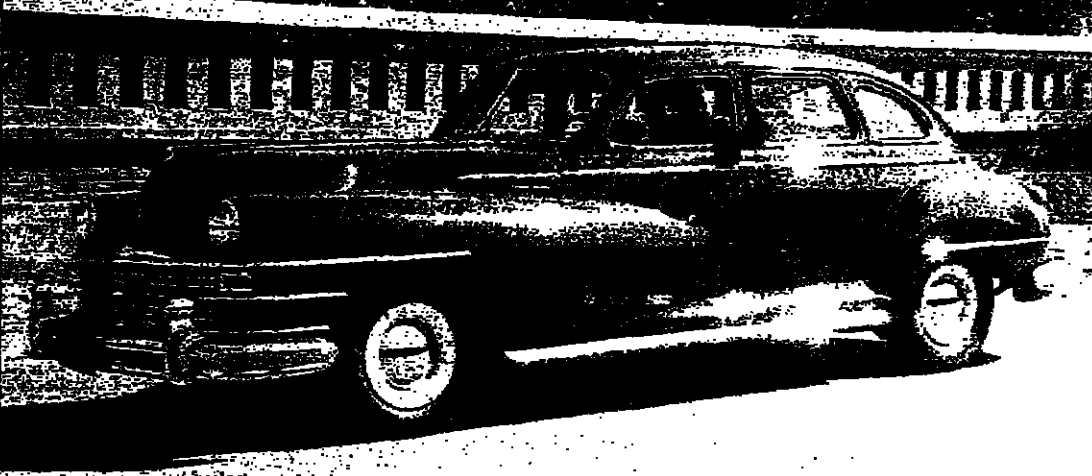
About her inner life, we may be allowed to take our own line. Sharp witicisms written in private letters between family members are notoriously misleading when interpreted in the cold light of history. The overriding impression of Jane Austen from her works is that she liked people, even when making fun of them. Indeed, she even liked them for providing her with good material. If she had lived a thoroughly frustrated life then her ability to laugh and love must be considered almost miraculous.

Rachel Billington has written a sequel to *Emma*, called *Perfect Happiness*.

Plain tales from China



Adeline Yen Mah's people, clockwise from far left: Franklin and Jackie (1940s); Aunt Ba Ba (1930s); family group with Adeline in white dress; Father, K C Li and Lee; Niang; Father driving in the 1940s; Ye Ye the Alsatian and Susan



Amanda Mitchison finally loses patience with the ugly duckling who grew into a straight-A swan

Adeline Yen Mah was born "fifth daughter", the lowest of the low in Chinese family hierarchy. The birth killed her mother, who died shortly afterwards of puerperal fever, thus branding the baby as unlucky. Adeline's father, whose decision not to allow a nurse to care for his wife may have caused her death, never forgave his daughter.

Not the most propitious start to life, but the family - living in the 1930s in the Chinese port city of Tianjin - were prosperous business people and there were devoted grandparents and lovely, loving Aunt Baba to play surrogate mother. But ... enter the evil stepmother Niang, a young, beautiful Eurasian who gives all her stepchildren Western names. When the family moves to Shanghai, she takes control, filling the house with flock wallpaper and red velvet sofas and introducing austerity programmes for the stepchildren - no pocket money, no fancy foods,

Fallen Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter by Adeline Yen Mah, Michael Joseph, £16.99

shaven heads for the boys, no speaking at table unless spoken to, no friends allowed in the house.

Niang's own two progeny are treated quite differently. And, of course, her rule embitters and divides. Relations between the step-siblings are invidious, with Adeline at the very bottom of the pecking order, receiving intermittent friendship from her nearest brother, James.

The only solace comes from her grandfather, and from loving Aunt Baba with whom Adeline shares a bedroom. Baba feeds the little girl preserved plums and encourages her to work hard at school, where she always seems to be top of the class.

Finally, in 1948, after a particularly vicious row with Niang, Adeline is despatched to a convent boarding school

1,000 miles away in Tianjin, where the civil war between the communist and Kuomintang armies is now raging. Her father insists that she must learn to change her spoiled ways and realise her worth, or rather her lack of it. Grandfather and Aunt Baba are prohibited from writing to her. She receives no visits, and no letters. In the meantime, the family set up a new life in Hong Kong.

Eventually, after Tianjin has fallen to the communists, Adeline is rescued by an aunt and brought to Hong Kong. But soon she finds herself back in another boarding school where she stays for several years, again receiving no letters or visits, and almost never going home for holidays.

Academically, little Adeline continues to shine. Eventually her father, now one of the most successful Chinese businessmen in Hong Kong, agrees to send her to England to train as a doctor. Later she emigrates to America, and the rest of the book traces Adeline's successive attempts

to win the affection of members of her family.

The book ends with her father and Niang dead, and Adeline discovering that her stepmother has fixed the family inheritance so that Adeline will receive nothing. Later, Adeline finds her father's original will, which includes her. She shows it to her brother James, who is most ambivalent and stands to lose from any changes. And here the narrative stops - we do not find out whether he does the decent thing and helps her. So we are left dangling, a state which is appropriate considering that unfinished business is so much the stuff of unhappy families and that this autobiography is also, one suspects, an open letter to Adeline Yen Mah's siblings.

One of the main components of Adeline's misery was the reserve and formality of Chinese society. None of the children, even in adult life, was able to confide their problems to their father.

Even Aunt Baba and the grandfather were struck dumb by convention - the grandfather left cowed and penniless, unable to ask for pocket money from Niang, and unable to confess his difficulties to his son.

A similar reserve imbues the writing of Adeline Yen Mah. There are a few moments of relief - the beautiful Chinese aphorisms that head each chapter and sprinkle the rest of the text, the descriptions of occasional moments when she talks with her grandfather or watches the boats in Hong Kong harbour from her boarding school.

But overall this is a grim, unforgettable tale, starkly told. The impression is of a solemn little rock of a girl - neat, tidy, clever, but numbed inside by the experience. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Adeline went on to qualify as an anaesthetist. And just as the wealth of Adeline's father gives an edge to the deprivations undergone by the family, so the restraint

of the narrative somehow makes the story all the more replete with blame. There is no rationalisation, no amateur psychologising, and no attempt to look at what really motivated her stepmother, or at why her father never saw what was happening and never defended his children. It is as if the author were thinking "Just the facts, just the facts..."

Perhaps this is a good thing. Some tales are better told plain, and a more elaborate version might lose our sympathy. Even as it is, there are moments when Adeline can tire a little: with her worn clothes and her unremitting A grades, she never herself behaves dishonourably or confesses to unpalatable emotions. And I have to confess that, just as no one of true human feeling can read the death of Beth in *Little Women* without weeping with laughter, so the account of Adeline's beloved scrawny little pet duckling being mauled by the family Alsatian made me snigger.



A week in books

In jail, they call it gate fever - the reckless delirium that overtakes inmates as their release date nears. On Wednesday night, I caught a trace of it in Virginia Bottomley's manner as the Heritage Secretary handed Dame Muriel Spark the third David Cohn Prize (worth £40,000 in all) for a lifetime achievement in British literature. Quoting Miss Jean Brodie back at her creator, the minister defined education as "a leading out of what is already there in the pupil's soul". Now that, as grizzled veterans of the *Sixties* will know, sums up the core of the "progressive" child-centred teaching that Mrs Bottomley's colleagues have tried for high on 18 years of expunging from our classrooms. Collective responsibility? No thanks. As Miss Jean once reminded her charges, "Cleopatra knew nothing of the team spirit" - not a sentiment we'll find among the coming manifesto bromides.

First awarded in 1993, the biennial Cohn prize already has a splendid record of honouring the *Awkward Squad*. The initial winner, Sir Vikia Naipaul, kept up his reputation as an Olympic-standard grouch with some *amais-moi-le-défilé* thoughts about the death of the novel. In 1995, Harold Pinter refrained from cursing US foreign policy in the atrium of Court Bank, but he did chill the blood with some gruesome passages from Webster's plays. Pinter was paying tribute to his English master at Hackney Downs - a theme pursued by Dame Muriel when she gave the £10,000 portion of the prize reserved for a beneficiary selected by the winner to arts projects at her alma mater, James Gillespie's High School in Edinburgh.

It was there, 70 years ago, that the nine-year-old Muriel Camberg wrote what she calls "an intended improvement" of Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin".



Boyd Tonkin

Browning's little rival clearly foreshadowed the fearless writer who, in a recent TV profile, scorned the "timid" authors of her age. In the 40 years since she published *The Comforters*, she has kept timidity at bay with one succinct and original fable of spiritual or social life after another. Because she has no time for English sentiment, and shuns the picturesque detail of character and place that many readers enjoy, Spark can strike the unconverted as a dry and cold contriver of intellectual puzzles. Yet it is just this theological inclination asperity that makes her voice so precious and unique.

An impatience with Anglo-Saxon platitudes began early. In the postwar years, the penniless young writer worked for the concealed nonentities of the Poetry Society (Now, I'm glad to say, a much saner place.) There she had a memorable run-in with the batty Marie Stopes - birth-control pioneer and dreadful poet. Superbly comic echoes of that period surface in her memoir *Curriculum Vitae* and in the 1980s novels *Loitering With Intent* and *A Fur Cry from Kensington*.

In her brisk, bracing tragicomedies, poky offices and bedsits (or the odd Tuscan villa) act as backdrop for a metaphysical drama that - in the words of Andrew Motion, who chaired the judging panel - "transfigures the commonplace and makes what is ordinary marvellous or sinister or strange". As Ben Okri, another judge, said afterwards, "It's time to bring elegant seriousness back into fashion". Reading Spark would be a painless way to manage that - and a few ousted politicians may have some time on their hands to do so pretty soon.



Hong Kong swan song

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM PILSTON

Compassion fatigue

Denis MacShane asks why we excuse China's cruelty

Beating the Retreat: Hong Kong under the last Governor by Tim Heald, Sinclair-Stevenson, £20 Hong Kong Goes Back edited by Judith Vidal-Hall and Yang Lian, Index on Censorship, £7.99

When will the world wake up about China? The vileness and brutality of apartheid South Africa. Pinochet's Chile or Brezhnev's Soviet Union called into being protests, boycotts, demonstrations and an engagement from the intellectual classes, as well as from trade unions and churches, that rattled the cages of those shop-soiled tyrannies. Yet every 20th-century evil carried out in the name of ideology or state is taking place daily in China. The abuses happen on a scale that often surpasses the crimes against human rights which mobilised the Pinters and Pilgers against rightist regimes, or the Rees-Moggs and Paul Johnsons against European communism.

But, on China, there is not a cheep, Wei Jingsheng, who has been in and out of prison since he first called for the "fifth freedom" of democracy in the late 1970s, has the moral stature and style of a Mandela or a Sakharov. Yet he is unknown in Britain. There is an ethical vacuum in our consideration of China. The usual excuse is that there is too much money to be made; the real reason is that at the end of the 20th century we suffer from the malady of human rights fatigue. Western liberals, having seen off fascism and communism, have become complacent.

All honour then to *Index on Censorship*, this year celebrating 25 years of reporting on threats to free expression, for a readable collection of articles on the lack of freedom in China and Hong Kong. In addition to withering analyses by the admirable John Gittings and Jonathan Mirsky, the pieces by Chinese writers,

journalists and activists bury the lie that the Chinese are not interested in the core freedoms that define democracy.

Sadly, the handing back of Hong Kong in July will mark the end of the island's role as an independent source of information on China and, more broadly, on Asia. The handling of the transfer has been one of the most shameful chapters in the long march of Conservative rule since 1979. Margaret Thatcher bungled her talks with Deng Xiaoping; thereafter, Whitehall treated Hong Kong as a profit centre until John Major was presented with the problem of what to do with the defeated MP Chris Patten five years ago.

Patten is a humane, cultured one-nation Tory. Brought up in the security of suburban Ealing in the 1950s, he left Oxford well before the intellectual revolts that turned some to the left, but many more into the angry anti-socialists who swept Mrs Thatcher to glory. The party that Patten joined - of Heath, McLeod, Butler and Boyle - was turned into a home fit for David Evans and John Redwood. By then, Patten had made the Faustian pact of all ambitious politicians. At the start of the 1990s, this fastidious, witty man was reduced to grunting about Porksies and pretending he had something in common with Brian Mawhinney.

Hong Kong needed political leadership to prepare its people for rule by Beijing. But Patten was not the right person and Major, with his unerring lack of judgement, has sacrificed his friend's career in the belief he was doing him a favour.

The problem was not that Patten set

out to antagonise the Chinese - he didn't - but that he was not allowed to do anything for the people of Hong Kong save give them their first and last essay in voting for an assembly. This was a symbolic two-fingered democratic salute up the nasal cavity of Deng's dictatorship, but as relevant to real politics as the poll tax.

Of incomparably greater use would have been the creation of the building blocks of civil society - by encouraging press freedom or workers' organisation, and by enshrining human rights in law. But Patten's masters in London were not interested in the politics of freedom. What was denied by Major in Britain could not be offered by Patten in Hong Kong.

Tim Heald's artlessly written account of his visits to Hong Kong as a guest of his old Balliol friend, Chris Patten, is a much better book than his rambling start suggests. In explaining what makes Patten tick, the more official biographies will not do a better job. Heald has written not just an elegy in the last graveyard of British colonialism, but an anthem of farewell to his and Patten's England - a place of minor public schools, Oxbridge, Denis Compton and mess dinners.

Patten, observes Heald, never bothered to get to grips with the Chinese. Instead, the last Governor spent his spare hours in Hong Kong learning French. It is not Britain that says goodbye to Hong Kong on 30 June. It is China and Asia that say *adieu* to England. Britain's future lies in making a success of Europe, not quick bucks in Asia.

Patten understands this. Can he persuade his party, or has the Tory generation that he, Heald and John Major represent outlived its purpose, at home and abroad?

They make a wilderness and call it peace

As his title shows, Graham Harvey is not afraid to use a sensational phrase. Within his first few paragraphs he refers to the "living garment" of the countryside, a metaphor coined by W H Hudson to describe the flowers covering chalk grassland, and declares that it is turning into a shroud. This impassioned book demonstrates that such language, far from being histrionic, simply meets the case. Our countryside is indeed being killed, and by the very people who are charged with its care.

What makes Harvey's book valuable is the intensity of his feeling. He grieves the wanton extinction of our "national treasure" - the mixed-farm structure of the prewar years - and fervently resents the alliance of politicians, civil servants and landowners who have grown rich on its bones.

Harvey is an angry man, and his anger allows him persuasively to restate a case that has become wearisome in its familiarity. It seems

The Killing of the Countryside by Graham Harvey, Cape, £16.99

scarcely credible that we have now been deprived of 97 per cent of our meadowland. And who can believe that after all the pleas on their behalf, hedgerows are still being lost or, rather, plundered at the rate of 10,000 miles per year? The populations of our so-called common songbirds are falling at a desperate rate. The tree sparrow's numbers have dropped by 89 per cent in the past 25 years, and the skylark's by 58 per cent. As we in Suffolk can testify, Harvey does not exaggerate when he speaks of "silent fields".

His chief concern is to show how the countryside is being killed by the subsidy system, which currently costs you and me £10bn a year. Not only are we helping to enrich the already rich, we are paying twice - once with our taxes, and again by surrendering our countryside to poison or plough. And we pay again when we buy food that is nutritionally void and contaminated with the chemicals that fuel the agribusiness machine.

If I have a criticism of Harvey's splendid tirade, it is that he does not analyse in sufficient detail the formidable lobby that keeps the gravy pouring onto the plates of the landowning class. Land and political power turn out to be branches of the same indestructible plant.

Harvey points out that landowners, not country inhabitants, dictate the shape of the landscape. Whitehall and the agricultural industry work together to reshape the countryside, a symbiosis of public service and private capital that

leaves the suckered public to pay the bill. He says that country people, a third of the population, "live on the periphery like temporary expatriates in some foreign land". Temporary? When, then, may we go home? Not in the foreseeable future. Landowners will not accept that, while the country may be their property, the landscape belongs to all of us.

Harvey is the agricultural story editor of *The Archers* - for many listeners an authentic echo of country life. It is therefore a shame the programme does not contain a representative of the villainies denounced here. Brian Aldridge and Simon Pemberton come close to fitting the bill, but we do not hear about the destructive consequences of their methods. Larks still sing in Ambridge but, if the countryside really is being killed, Ambridge too must suffer.

Graham Harvey is interviewed on page 16

Paperbacks



By Helen Stevenson

Adventures in Capitalism by Toby Litt (Minerva, £6.99) Toby Litt combines a rumbustious flair for comedy with an ability to write about the world in a knowing postmodern shorthand. All these 18 stories are richly textured with brand names and the kind of hip vernacular that both describes and disfigures the contemporary world. Litt has a way of dignifying wackiness without ever tipping over into the surreal. You end up feeling as if you've downed 18 hot shots of differently flavoured, lethal vodka. My favourite is "Mr Kipling", a eulogy to the cake maker, in which the only thing that stands between exceedingly good and perfection is the possibility of an inclination towards Rome, betrayed by "the occasional overuse of cinnamon in his mince pies".

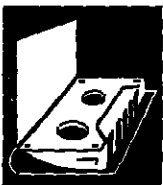
Not Entitled by Frank Kermode (Flamingo, £6.99) "Between these origins and that ending is where the weather is, fair or foul: the climate of a life. Not as some have said, a dream, but a climate, a microclimate, le temps qu'il fait." You do not get the impression, on reading this autobiography, that the sun ever quite came out for Frank Kermode. He inclines towards a weary acceptance of a life that has been nobody else's fault. This is surprising in one who, in his critical writings at least, has always seemed to be good at chasing away clouds - of bigotry, suspicion, muddle. He writes about his poor childhood on the Isle of Man, his wartime

career in the navy, his long years as an academic with grace and honesty, but reports a feeling of having always been "where one is not entitled to be". A book full of odd, signposted omissions, unsatisfactory only in its brevity and mild asperity.

An Italian Education by Tim Parks (Minerva, £6.99) This is novelist Tim Parks's second contribution to that potentially exasperating genre of books by English people who have made their lives in a Mediterranean country. He tries to slip in a few provisos, but you feel the hardships of his existence could be counted on the toes of his delightful half-Italian offspring. Parks's friendly tone, his endearing habit of trying to be wry and play down the pleasure of it all, saves him from the worst pitfalls of Mayle-ism.

The Shadow Man by Mary Gordon (Bloomsbury, £7) This riveting investigative memoir of Mary Gordon's Jewish father, an American of Polish origin who converted to Catholicism, bears a strangely ambiguous title. Her beloved father is later discovered to have been a flagrant anti-Semite, inept writer and mythomaniac. But it is not so much he who has cast the shadow as Gordon herself. If successful analysis means the transformation of ghosts into ancestors, this work may not have fulfilled its purpose. David Gordon's ghost is there to the last page, warming and chilling, plaguing and soothing.

Audiobooks



Ralph Fiennes's sinewy voice reading Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (Macmillan, 4hrs, £9.99) is an attractive supplement to his much-praised performance in the

film of the book, and though purists will resent any abridgement, this one is more generous than most. A galaxy of super-star readers are allied with bargain basement value in a joint venture by Hodder Headline and W H Smith. The first 15 titles in their £6.99 Classic Collection set include Julie Christie matched to *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Joanna Lumley to *Persuasion* and Kate Winslet to *Sense and Sensibility*.

Christina Hardyment



Salvador Dali outside his villa in Spain in 1951, photographed by Daniel Farson

HULTON GETTY

Soldiers, sailors and airheads

There's more to life than dropped names, says Michael Arditti

In his early days at *Picture Post*, Daniel Farson photographed Edith Evans as Lady Bracknell. This breathless account of the myriad people, places and careers (among them critic, biographer, TV reporter, pub owner and merchant seaman) he has packed into his 70 years would prompt that forbidding character's most reproving reference to "a life crowded with incident", even as her creator was greeting a fellow-diner at the panthers' feast.

In the art of being in the right place at the right time, Farson is a Michelangelo. As the son of a celebrated American journalist, he had an early brush with fame and infamy when Gandhi visited his London home and Hitler patted his head in Munich. Evacuated to Chicago in 1940, he was taken by Somerset Maugham to spend a weekend with his lower-lower: walking into the French pub in Soho, he was instantly befriended by John Deakin and Francis Bacon; he even contrived to be sailing down the Volga and suspected of spying during the coup against Gorbachev.

He drops names at a rate which would not disgrace Dempster's diary. As a parliamentary correspondent, he was chased down Westminster corridors by Tom

Never a Normal Man by Daniel Farson, HarperCollins, £25

Dribberg, as an undergraduate editor, he commissioned Kenneth Tynan. He discussed film-making with Orson Welles in Paris, the crucifixion with Dali in Spain and was treated to a very laboured pun on his "behind" by Noel Coward.

Politicians too came within his orbit. Lady Thatcher prodded his chest to illustrate her credo "See, see, see: learn, learn, learn", while his association with Jeremy Thorpe almost led to his arrest in the Norman Scott case. He flitted from East End low-life (the Krays provided him with "Mad Teddy" Smith as a minder) to Hollywood high life (organising Judy Garland's birthday party). And that is not to mention Colin Wilson, Cudlin Thomas, Joan Littlewood, old Auntie Diana Cooper and all.

His most sustained claim to fame is as a denizen of Soho and a modern Vasari to artists from John Minton and Lucian Freud to Gilbert and George and Damien Hirst. His closest association, however, was with Francis Bacon. Much of what he writes on Bacon has appeared elsewhere, although it is salutary to discover that even such a privileged eye can fail - as

when he congratulated David Sainsbury on a Bacon portrait of his father, only to be informed, stiffly, that it was his mother.

There is not much evidence that his current retirement in Devon has left any time for reflection. On the contrary: despite the initial promise that, because he has no family to embarrass, he is discarding reticence, he engages in little introspection and less self-revelation. He is happy to discuss Francis Bacon's masochism but - apart from revealing that he belonged to a world where AC/DC meant "the liked soldiers and sailors" - he tells us very little about his own affairs. It's a strange lacuna given a concluding admission that sexuality has ruled his life. Likewise, he discusses his father's alcoholism, while merely reporting his own penchant for two or three bottles of spirits a day.

Ultimately, both the strength and weakness of these memoirs rests in the fact that Farson is, primarily, a photographer: a profession that has become almost a fictional shorthand for the moral vacuum at the heart of great events. What he provides is a series of vivid snapshots, devoid of any attempt to set them in a broader context. The blessing is that he has had such fascinating subjects in front of his lens.

Ewe are my heart's desire

Carol Birch prefers country by-ways to the streets of Dublin

In the Beginning by Catherine Dunne, Cape, £9.99
One Day as a Tiger by Anne Haverly, Chatto, £9.99

Nothing sums up the schizophrenia of modern life like contemporary Ireland, where urban sophisticates have delighted in puncturing time-honoured shibboleths, while among the bores and "candy-coloured village streets the old ways persist. Two first novels from Irish women, one urban, one rural, aptly illustrate this.

On the strength of Catherine Dunne's novel, *In the Beginning*, it seems that the old certainties have been jettisoned in favour of a resolute blandness. It tells the story of Rose, perfect housewife and mother of three, whose husband walks out after 20 years of marriage. Rose picks herself up, dusts herself down and discovers beneath her doormat persona such reserves of strength and independence that within a year she has turned tragedy into triumph, scaling heights of self-respect she could never have dreamed of in marriage.

It is a simple, undemanding book with a plucky heroine and a message of hope, rocking no boats and adhering to standard truisms of the British and American feminist novel of 20 or 30 years ago. Divorce is a liberation for women and, in the long run, is better for children than life with two unhappy parents. Ben, the husband, is no loss, being despicable and boring and prone to make a mess in the kitchen. Women friends are strong and dependable. PMT is a window onto reality that men don't understand.

Catherine Dunne is good on the minutiae of domestic life and the sense of panic faced by women desperately trying to earn a living and keep a family fed and stable, but this is a simplification of the anguish that attends the breakdown of a 20-year relationship, and is unconvincingly reassuring about the effects on children. Still, the woman finds herself, or at least makes a start, and it catches convincingly the brisk modernity and fashionable cynicism of Dublin life.

It is from just this that Marty, hero of Anne Haverly's *One Day as a Tiger*, flees back to the family farm in Tipperary, relinquishing a promising academic career at Trinity College. Here in the fields of his happy childhood, he falls into the role of layabout younger brother to solid sheep farmer Pierce, a truly good character portrayed without awe or sentiment. Hopelessly and shamefully in love with Pierce's young wife, Etti, Marty also becomes fixated with a lamb called Missy, runt of a herd of sheep experimentally doctored with human genes. Convinced that she has rejected her ovine nature, he takes the pitiful creature into his house and develops a bizarre relationship with her, a projection of his desperate need for love.

This relationship is taken totally seriously by the writer but not by the local community. When Missy becomes the means whereby Etti responds to Marty, the stage is set for a tragedy of classic proportions.

On one level this is a simple story, plainly yet poetically told; on another it's a complex web of humour and pain. It is about the cruelties inflicted on animals by sentimental anthropomorphism, as the beloved lamb becomes whatever is projected onto it. It is also the best observation of modern rural Ireland I have yet to read. Haverly's depiction of "the country way" seeks not to grind an axe, to reverie, romanticise or vilify, but simply to behold. Thus, rural life is a possible route to multifaceted and mad, but it also has beauty and dignity and its roots reach into mythology.

There seems to be a tendency for some Irish women writers to feel that they must consciously make a statement on the subject of "Women in Ireland". Catherine Dunne is in this mode, concerned thereby to point out hypocrisy and emphasise a rot in the traditions. Anne Haverly has a more universal view. She sees the rot but has a clearer view of what's left of the fabric. She cares as much about men as women, the old and the new, and sees the complexity of both. *In One Day as a Tiger*, she has created a haunting, subtle and beautiful book.

All together now

Anthony Giddens challenges the prophets of doom

Connectivity by Geoff Mulgan, Chatto & Windus, £16.99

There is a popular view of society at the moment which runs something like this: 30 or 40 years ago, social life was a predictable and ordered affair. Families by and large held together and children had a stable social environment. People took pride in their local communities and there was a general sense of civic culture. The welfare state provided for the needy or those in trouble.

Today, so this view runs, much of this is in tatters. We live in a world of increasing fragmentation, where the family is under threat, children are at risk and the fabric of communal life is unravelling. There are different ideas about how this situation has come to pass, but the most common one blames excessive individualism. Put bluntly, we have accumulated too many rights and we recognise too few obligations. Many people, including many children, have lost a sense of right and wrong. For anyone who takes such a view, there is an obvious remedy. We should reintroduce a firm social morality, social discipline and punishment.

Geoff Mulgan's new book seeks to put something quite different in place of the hypothesis of social and moral decay. We don't live in a society with a one-way ticket to disintegration. Almost the opposite: we are entering a new age of interdependence and co-operation, an age of "connectivity" - a word which Mulgan has plucked from old English. What Mulgan calls connectivity, others term globalisation. The arrival of a cosmopolitan society increasingly links us all to one another.

Such interdependence has positive and negative aspects. Instantaneous electronic communication allow friends who rarely see each other to keep in touch from far corners of the world. On the other hand, we all face common ecological problems, from which no one on the face of the earth can escape. The key question is, can we foster the positive aspects of globalisation while containing the damage it produces? Put more specifically, how can we reconcile individual freedom with due recognition of the need for social collaboration?

Mulgan attempts a serious response to the moral-authority lobby. We should recognise, he accepts, that freedom has

its pathologies. In the advanced economies - in stark contrast to the poorer regions of the world - the most difficult problems are not about material shortages but about what the author terms "disorders of freedom". The freedom to travel to work alone in a private car, for example, leads to traffic congestion, urban decay and air pollution. In an age of interdependence, the freedom of individuals may rebound upon others and themselves.

Since many of the connections which now bind us are new, we can't deal with them by reverting to traditional forms of regulation and authority. We need new concepts and new policies, Mulgan argues, if we are to balance freedom and interdependence. But most of our political ideas have come down from an altogether different era than the one we now confront.

Mulgan identifies two ways forward. One is educational - the cultivation of a mentality of partnership or co-operation.

"Rather than decline, the dominant trend is one of moral progress"

We should ask how far the family, firms, schools or universities promote mature and capable citizens. At the moment, too many such groups simply produce attitudes of dependence - as the welfare state, to some degree, has done. Dependence is the contrary of interdependence - the chief reason why a return to traditional authority is impossible.

The second factor is more structural. We need to revive the idea of public life, swamped for the moment by the high tide of free-market philosophy. Mulgan does not accept that the advent of the global age signals the end of politics. But public life can't be reconstructed merely by appealing to older models of the nation. We have to reconcile local and global interdependence. A variety of means could allow political reform to go along with the creation of a more confident and involved citizenry.

Here Mulgan mentions electronic voting, citizens' juries and other "deliber-

ative" groups. Refreshingly, he combats the conventional view that government can do little to foster civic solidarity. City planning, for example, can encourage public spaces which are safe, accessible and promote sociability. Here, ecological concerns should be integrated with the drive to a renewed sense of civic involvement.

Mulgan borrows a phrase of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson, "ecology of mind". Ecological orders in nature are systems of interdependence between plants, animals and the physical environment. As in the physical world, we need to show how different ways of life can coexist. Consider the debate about family values. The role of government is not to defend the so-called traditional family, but to encourage the mentalities which make different forms of family life work and also allow their members to develop wider civic bonds.

All this must appear mere pie in the sky to those who feel that moral life has already more or less disintegrated. Mulgan has an answer for them. Rather than decline, he says, the dominant trend is one of moral progress. Human rights are becoming more firmly embedded in international law and many new moral concerns have surfaced, such as those to do with the plight of animals or with environmental decay. The spread of communications enlarges the scope of moral language and allows moral issues to be openly debated rather than simply sanctified by tradition. "Connectivity", in Mulgan's words, "makes the universal potential of morality practical for the first time."

I have a good deal of sympathy with the ideas that Mulgan develops. His book has many virtues, not least the stand he takes against the prophets of moral despair. I think he is right to suggest that we are entering an age whose basic characteristics we as yet only partly understand and which is poorly conceptualised as the "information era".

Yet in the end, I'm not sure that the concept of "connectivity" is much better. Interesting though Mulgan's arguments are, they could have been given a harder edge than one finds here. Much of his discussion is superficial, with too many difficulties skirted over too easily. I don't think that those who hold different views will find themselves convinced.

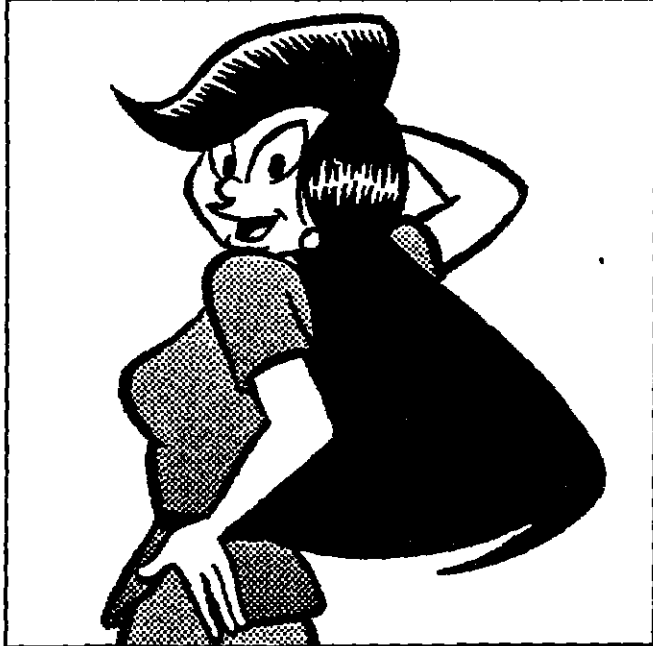
NEXT WEEK IN



THE INDEPENDENT

LILY WONG

The Hong Kong cartoon strip that China hated is back. The death of Lily Wong caused worldwide headlines - now, she takes her final bow for the last 100 days before the handover



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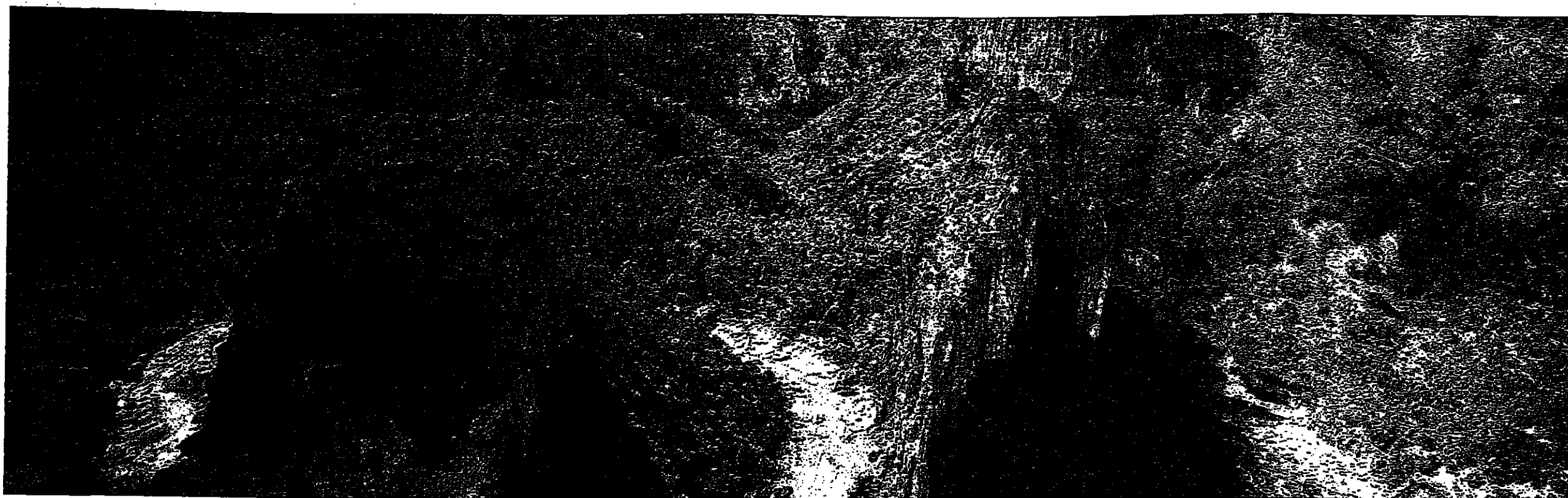


THE INDEPENDENT

IT IS...ARE YOU?

travel & outdoors

Driving from Istanbul to London 10
First of the spring and summer snow 13
Country special with Jake Fiennes 16,17



The Copper Canyon, one of the biggest in the world, is crossed by the El Pacifico railway with its 73 tunnels and 28 bridges

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT HARDING

Rivers deep, mountains high

Richard Holledge journeys along Mexico's Copper Canyon by bus, Chevy and rail

Happy hour in the Posada Mirador. An impromptu trio of waiters strum hectorically at their guitars. Reuben, Heidi, Scott and Ezra clap along, sing along and as the margaritas – three for the price of one – take their hold, they dance along. We know their names because these are on ID badges stuck to their sensible travellers' simulated cotton windbreakers. In the bar, Harvey and Earl are watching CNN and trying to whip up some interest in the result of the US election.

"Clinton winning?"
"Yeah, looks like it. Dos Carta Blancas, please."
It could be almost anywhere, almost any hotel colonised by the great American tourist trail anywhere in the world. Here we eat steak with baked potatoes instead of *pollo a mole* – chicken in a bitersweet chocolate sauce. Tortillas? Please. The morning's scrambled eggs come American-style, without the challenging piquancy of *huevos a Mexicano*.

But by dawn we know that this is no ordinary stopover. The first lightning of the day outlines the rim of the mighty canyon that stretches thousands of metres down and across. As the sun pops over the rim it reveals the vastness of the scene. From the hotel, an eyrie built on the rim of a canyon 2,500 metres above sea level, we can see, way below us, a deep, dry river-bed edged by forest and small fields of maize, and canyon upon canyon stretching away into the dawn pinkness. The hummingbirds start their

darting progress from one tree to another; the eagles recommence their steady soaring arcs; in the distance a donkey brays.

It's a sight that led us to get up early – those of us who had the strength, after the assault on the margaritas the night before – and stand on our balconies in silent awe.

The hotel is at the half-way point of one of the great combinations of nature and engineering in the world. The Copper Canyon railway trip takes 13 hours (at least) and stretches from the sweaty Pacific coast town of Los Mochis to the industrial city of Chihuahua, set high on the plain in flat, hot farmland. In between, 73 tunnels, 28 bridges and a gaggle of neglected little villages whose poverty seems exaggerated by the relative glamour of the mighty blue train which clanks and grinds into their perfunctory stations carrying a cargo of Reubens, Heidis, Scotts and Ezras. Many make the trip in one go, but it is best to get on and off the train at various points. One ticket will cover the journey.

The train to the coast starts at 7.30 each morning in Chihuahua. I decided to skip the overnight and headed straight from the airport to the massive hangar of a bus station on the outskirts of the city. The first half of the great El Pacifico railway trip began by bus.

The air-conditioned bus hammers over the plain, often parallel with the line, with romantic laments blasting from the radio; it winds into the sierra and arrives five hours later in Creel.

No problem with accommodation here. A lad attaches himself to



The Canyon train SIMON CALDER

me as I get off the bus and guides me over the railway line, clambering nimbly over the wagons laden improbably with Recreation Vehicles (more American colonisation) to the small, backpackers' lodge of San Margaritas. It is as if time had stood still from my hitching days many years ago. A disparate crew of nationalities, communicating in varying degrees of broken English, radiating an air of competitive camaraderie over who has been furthest for the least. The only difference between now and those long-lost hippy days is that the peripatetic youth of San Margaritas look clean and sin-free, and stride out winsomely under state-of-the-art rucksacks.

Creel is virtually a one-street town, straggling dustily along the railway line. It has a small square with an optimistic bandstand, a church whose morning bells act as an alarm clock by clanging out at the same time as dawn's punctual 7.20 arrival, and a little shop selling knick-knacks for the local Catholic mission. The place is an improbable meeting of Indians and tourists. The Indians, the Taramuhumara, are increasingly aware of their own commercial worth. They wander into town from the surrounding hills, or come on the three-days-a-week bus from valley-floor, subtropical villages such as Batopilas. The men still wear curious, skirt-like garments round their nether regions and the women give the impression that their ancient

traditions have held firm since the tribe fled to the sierra from the Spanish. Now the valleys and their network of small hotels are increasingly filled with American package holidaymakers, who are well-behaved and credulous in that way of American tourists, but none the less there.

Not that this is high-profile tourist country. The mainstay of local wealth is logging, and judging by the neat wooden houses in the countryside and the steady procession of Chevy FWD and Dodge Rams that four-wheel-drive their way up and down the street every evening in a latter-day version of "Mexican Graffiti", tourism is likely to remain an adjunct.

It is easy to get a glimpse of the Indian lifestyle. Walk to the end of the village, past the cemetery with its poignant display of plastic flowers and scattering of marigold leaves left from the previous week's Día de la Muerte, when all Mexico flocks to cemeteries to honour the dead. You find yourself in a valley with smallholdings, aggressive dogs, a few browsing horses, the constant fleeting shadow of the floating eagles, rustling maize, and an ancient tractor scything through the wheat.

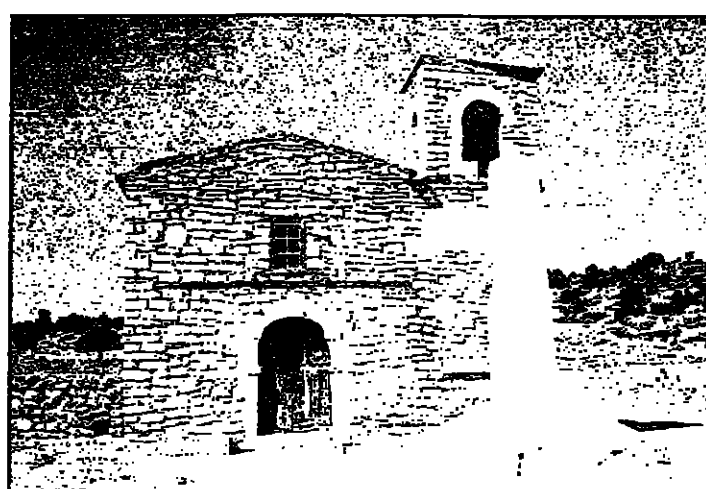
In fact, the influence of tourism lies only with a few undemanding attempts by local drivers to inveigle you on trips and a few half-hearted attempts by children to sell some wood carvings. The main drag has a few simple cafés – try Veronica's for the best breakfasts and Hernandez for a thin, red pork chop with salsa – and is so unspoilt that there is only one bar where you

can buy a tequila. It must be the influence of the Alcoholics Anonymous group, which advertises itself discreetly on the outskirts of town.

One of the taxi-drivers finally prevailed on me to take a trip: it was the sign on the side of his Chevy – "English Speaks" – that won me over. He persuaded me not to wait for the train – bound to be late, anyway – so I crowded into the Chevy with a trio of Mexicans from Chicago and he whizzed us to the next station on the line, Divisadero. We detoured for a mighty view over the Rio Otreros via a cleared stretch of forest. "It used to be a landing-strip," he said. "Marijuana. Police come."

Am I ever going to get on the train? It is meant to reach the half-way point at Divisadero by 1.45pm. The view is so powerful here that the train stops for 15 minutes to allow travellers to pick their way through a gaggle of Indians selling grass-made baskets and more grass-made baskets and marvel at the view, cameras clicking. A few minutes and another stop, the Posado Barranco. The three girls stoically weaving grass baskets hardly look up at the tourists waiting for the train. Older women protect their selection of copper bits and pieces with similar scant regard for Elmer, with his baseball cap proudly displaying "Retire" on the front, or Anthea, eager to return to the comfort of her RV in Baja California, clutching a vast bin-liner of woven baskets, or Abigail, a child of the Sixties, absently watching her offspring wander off down the line.

The train arrives, clunking,



Indian lifestyle: a church near Creel PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD HOLLEDGE

grunting and whistling, alongside the short, wooden platform, officious guards order people into seats where there are broken blinds, or have the carriage side blocking the view. We had to sit where we were told, despite the fact that the train was less than half full.

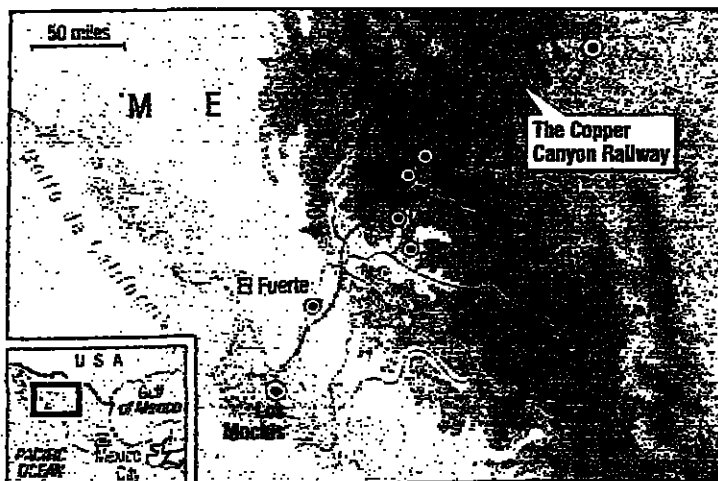
And since all well-prepared travellers know that the best view on this particular journey is on the left as you head west, the conflict for a decent seat was intense. It took at least 10 minutes, with rows of officials of escalating degrees of seniority, gold braid and pomposity, to strike a deal.

It is an extraordinary trip. In a succession of loops, tunnels and cliff edges, the train sinks deeper into the canyon, passing a few smallholdings, occasional maize fields and a handful of villages. Increasing time is spent on the platform between the carriages, watching the train snaking away in front and behind. As it drops slowly and circuitously toward the sea, the

climate warms up, leaving the great, stark boulders, bare cliff edges and pine forests behind. Now the trackside is covered with cacti shaped like pun pipes, or like giant, alien squid clinging on to the cliff sides.

As dusk falls the train sidles out of the great gorges with their tops now touched by the setting sun, and reaches the River Chiripias. It stretches wide and shining black in the gathering gloom. The train groans over the river on a narrow bridge, only to stop at a disturbing height. Has it broken down or is it simply stopping for us to admire the view? Casting aside the terror of vertigo, we peer straight down to the river below and off into the distance as it glides toward the Pacific.

The train gives a blast and gathers speed. Hundreds of feet below, half submerged by the river, the twisted remains of two freight wagons. Maybe the bridge was as perilous as it seemed, after all.



You can in the Canyon

The trip: The Chihuahua to Pacifico train departs every morning from each end of the line – Los Mochis in the west, Chihuahua in the east, with a one-way fare of about £25. You should buy the ticket the day before travel, though it can be bought on the train.

Getting there: To Mexico City: flights with Aero Mexico from Charles de Gaulle, Paris, from £343 – Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, British Airways, £459 – Monday, Thursday, Saturday, direct.

To Chihuahua: £81 one-way with Aero Mexico. Flights also to Los Mochis for the west-east trip.

Tours, agents: Journey Latin America offers bespoke tours of the area. It can arrange flights with Lufthansa (from Frankfurt) for £396. South American Experience (0171-976 5511) offers £410 on Iberia via Madrid.

Information: Mexican Ministry of Tourism, 60 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DS (0171-734 1058).

"We presume your item headed 'Orléans' for you by one of those Transport ministers who never use public transport." Last week's alphabetical article on the British invasion of France was all my own work, but attracted a good helping of heckling from readers such as Terry and Jenny Eaton of Milton-under-Wychwood, who took issue with the suggestion that students could hitch from Oxford to Orléans for £0. Their letter continues:

"Pedestrians are banned from motorways for obvious reasons, so hitching along the M40 and M25 is not perhaps the best advice.



Simon Calder

Now for the hitchhiker's guide to dissent ...

M25 is fraught with problems due to the number of all-motorway junctions.

A motorway is also the subject of a letter from Harry Gibson of Bury. I suggested that a good way to dodge tolls on the autoroutes on a journey from Newcastle to Nancy was to sneak through Belgium and Luxembourg. "Tolls begin only at the

French border," I concluded. But Mr Gibson writes: "The French motorway which runs from Luxembourg around Metz to Nancy is in fact toll-free."

Patrick Bowes writes from Plymouth with amplification: "What is not very clear to the British who are trying to get away to France cheaply and without fuss are the remarkable offers run by SNCF and Eurostar which enable you to do Waterloo-Lyon for £99 return, or Avignon, Marseille or Nice for £109 return. Just as you say that Luton is the new aviation gateway to Europe, well, Lille is the point you step off your Eurostar train and step on

to a high-speed TGV train to south-west France, the Riviera or even the Alps without the worry of changing trains in Paris."

Picture the scene: platform four at Birmingham International station on Thursday afternoon, packed with delegates departing from the British Travel Trade Fair.

Having been briefed at the Virgin stand about how Richard Branson's company would revitalise rail travel, everyone waits eagerly for the Virgin Cross Country train to the south, due at 3.16pm. At the appointed moment it appears – but presents a challenge to the assembled

throne by hurtling through at 100mph. When one passenger asks one of the station staff if that was indeed her train, he replies with aplomb: "Yes – didn't you manage to catch it?"

The train finally comes to a halt some distance beyond the station. The next service is not for an hour; more to the point, the train is full of people hoping to catch planes from Birmingham's airport. So eventually the train is reversed, causing miscellaneous mayhem for other services. As he waits for the errant train to back up, one disgruntled delegate mutters "Hope this doesn't happen to Branson's planes."



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From Istanbul by 'people bus'

What's it like to cross Europe by car? And is it cheaper than flying? Hugh Pope found out, the hard way

Perhaps I just wanted to know if it was feasible. Or because taking an aeroplane year after year seemed too easy, and, frankly, boring. A few hours' flight high over the enticing snow-capped mountains and green plains of Europe and I was back in the same traffic jam out of Heathrow.

What would it be like, I wondered, to drive from one end of Europe to the other? Was this not why we had bought a big, air-conditioned American "people mover", doubtless itching for the open road after a year of school and supermarket runs? And how easy the map made it look! A sweeping run from Istanbul, where I work, across the north of Greece to the Adriatic port of Igoumenitsa, our jumping-off point for Italy's autostrada heading north and home.

The last ferry from there, the agent said, would leave at 11.30pm. It occurred to us that it might be easier to turn back. But our honour was engaged. We had to do it. It was just unfortunate that we celebrated the decision by taking a wrong turn out of Kavala, giving ourselves an extra hour along a lonely mountain road.

But here we were, 11 hours and 800km (500 miles) out of Istanbul, hitting one of the ugly city of Thessaloniki's revolving rush hours. There were nine hours left to reach Igoumenitsa.

Soon afterwards we struck east into real mountains. For the last 100 miles to Ioannina we twisted up to a 1,700-metre (5,600ft) pass which amply showed why the Ottoman governors of the province often ended up as independent kinglets.

The road seemed to be following the line of the old donkey track, but it was also beautifully cambered. Our big car zipped between mist-bound hairpin bends, past marble blocks that had tumbled off on to the edge of ravines. For me, it was an exhilarating experience. My white-knuckled wife kept her own counsel.

With my watch showing 10.10pm, we careened around the mountain lake and the outskirts of Ioannina. There was still hope of reaching the ferry in a last plunge through more mountains to the port of Igoumenitsa. By a miracle, we survived and made it on the dot of 11.30. The ferry was still loading in the harbour, alone and brightly lit against the black sea.

I pulled up at the harbour entrance, the tyres hot and fragrant, 17 hours and 1300km (810 miles) out of Istanbul. I was sent back. "You have to buy a ticket," the customs men not unreasonably advised us. In my haste I then spent £200 on a cabin in the wrong ferry, and (through lack of choice) to the wrong port, not convenient Ancona, but Brindisi, closer by sea but further to the south of Italy.

Our ferry eventually steamed in late at 3.30am. It had no air-conditioning and few passengers, and one of its engines broke down in mid-Adriatic, forcing us to proceed at walking speed.

"Oh, don't worry," the pretty Anglo-Greek purser airily said. "We heard on the radio that the gas tank of another ferry blew up today, and of course you know about the one that ran aground three days ago. During the season, they don't stop for repairs, you know."

We eased into the pretty port of Brindisi at 3.30pm. After the Greek roadworks, the Italian autostrada was beautiful, straight as the seam of a stocking up from the heel of Italy, the laurel bushes in the dividing strip bursting with pink and white blooms, the succession of high bridges and deep tunnels a breathtaking tribute to long-forgotten engineers.

We were far behind schedule, but our spirits could not help rising in the Italian autostrada cafés. Each was as friendly as the next, with chatty espresso bars and delicious sandwiches.



Low quay: Corfu is a staging post en route to the Italian port of Brindisi, where rustic charm gives way to hi-tech, high-speed autostradas

The Italians also drive fast, which suited us. Our need to beat the clock forced us to hurry through the night, and I found I much preferred driving the motorway at night. Traffic evaporates and the illusion of movement is much greater, since you see only close speeding lights, not the unchanging countryside mocking your slow progress from a distance.

By 4.30am, 13 hours out of Brindisi, 47 hours out of Istanbul, and £40 out of pocket to the autostrada system, we reached the Mont Blanc tunnel. A credit card swipe relieved us of £25 more for the pleasure of driving through it. Then, as dawn broke over Lake Geneva, the Swiss helped themselves to £25 for a 10-minute short cut through their country. The fine castles that still guard each bend through Aosta-Chamounix valleys up to Mont Blanc doubtless once ran a similarly extortionate system.

For a while it all seemed worth it as we bowed along the lovely roads and awak-

ening countryside of eastern France. Sitting at the little town square café in Polignac, to the south west of Lyons, I mocked the vapour trails of the jets overhead. But I will also remember how much our coffees and croissants set us back when, next time, I am looking down from an aircraft eating my free breakfast.

Seen from the autoroute, the country-

hours from Brindisi and 57 hours from Istanbul. How much would it cost to take Le Shuttle through the Channel tunnel? "£64.95," said the man in the ticket booth. "Is that your cheapest?" I asked. "Well, if you take the day return, it's £59," the man answered.

Le Shuttle is so quick and frequent that almost all its passengers felt obliged to linger for hours in a nearby shopping centre. We tried to have a French meal to celebrate, but had to take the only fare on offer: Le Burger King.

Then came England. A motorway of cheap, concrete slabs, and shabby-looking small fields, made the place seem the most primitive we had seen since somewhere back in Greece - even the Turkish motorway was better - and the muddled scenes around a long M25 roadworks completed the impression that we were back on the margins of Europe.

It took another two hours to reach our final destination in Oxford. We had dri-

ven for 40 hours (not counting sleeping and eating time) over 3,880 kilometres (2,425 miles) from Istanbul, burnt 373 litres of petrol and in a total of 60 hours' travel had spent £600 - almost exactly the cost of a family's return air fares.

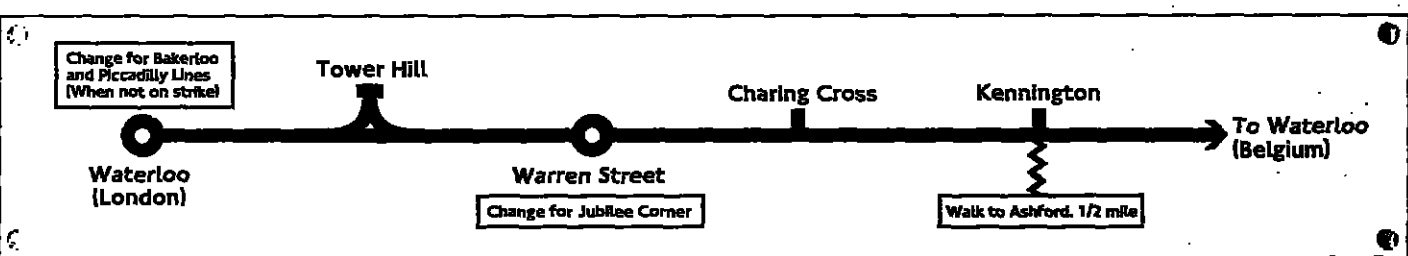
Now that it is over, a sense of pride and achievement has crept in, and I also have a hard-earned new sense for the geography of Europe, and an admiration for a new political unity that meant our passports were only glanced at twice. Our car papers were never asked for.

I also found out about a new European sense of cash. I never once had to worry about money. Cash machines coughed out local banknotes; credit cards were acceptable in most places. But with my pockets now full of useless small change and teller slips testifying to how much banks have ripped me off, I have become a firm supporter of the Euro.

And I have also learned an important lesson. Personal cars were indeed made for trips to schools and supermarkets. Next time I shall take the plane, and hire somebody else's car when I get there.



The road seemed to be following the line of an old donkey track ...



London Underground lines are grinding to a halt. So Simon Calder has devised an alternative, much more scenic line

The dark cloud over London, whose silver lining I was enjoying, was marching briskly. Time to move on. While London commuters stewed in buses standing in for the tubes to Elephant & Castle and New Cross, and the Jubilee Line extension went nowhere fast, I travelled alone but happy from Charing Cross to Tower Hill, then to Warren Street and Charing Cross again, ending up at Kennington. While Greater London Radio warned about delays, I was enjoying the

best of days. I could have extended the trip to Waterloo (Belgium), but hopping through the Kentish countryside through places sharing names with well-known Tube stations - commuting with nature along my Namesakes Line - proved too intoxicating. All the places on the line can be found strung above ground from the Medway to the Stour, within easy reach of ordinary, so-called "above-ground" trains.

You begin from Charing Cross station. London. Your train potters through places familiar from the tube map, such as Waterloo, London Bridge and New Cross, but from an unfamiliar angle - sweeping aloof past the sanctity of Southwark Cathedral and the desecration of south-east London. The pinnacle of Canary Wharf tower fingers for a dozen miles, indicating where the Jubilee Line may reach before the end of the century. Trucks toll across the Dartford River Crossing, while your train bowls across the Shorne Marsh, then dives into a three-mile tunnel to remind you what you're not missing beneath the streets of London. It emerges on the left bank of the Medway, upstream from the first stop: Tower Hill.

Tower Hill: The hill struggles to beat 100 feet in altitude, but its position means that its summit is a fine place from which to witness the cheerful confusion of the Medway Estuary. Four towns are crammed into as many miles: Chatham and Rochester vie for historical significance, while Strood and Gillingham scrap for ascendancy as the perfect dormitory town.

From Strood station, you follow the Medway downstream and soon see the wedge appear beside the waterside. Straight out of a geography textbook, it builds slowly from the west to a climax, then topples down a steep escarpment to the estuary. I clambered up the scarp slope through a miscellany of stumpy trees and bushes enlivened by some vivid wildflowers - as mauve as the Metropolitan Line, as red as the Central, and with the odd golden flash of a Circle Line buttercup.

Across the river, you can make out the keep of the Norman castle at Rochester - as high up as you are - and a brace of bridges over the Medway. No sight is stranger, though, than the one that

greeted you right at the top of Tower Hill. You hear them before you see them, a rumble of diesel engines punctuated by the odd graunch of gears. Grabbing clumps of grass, you haul yourself to the lip of the summit and are startled by the sight of five bulldozers in perfect formation, flattening the already smooth earth in an unnatural arena.

You have stumbled upon a Royal Engineers training ground where the military teaches civil engineering. They have to practice earthmoving somewhere, and the crest of Tower Hill is the chosen venue. At the rate they are shaving the hill, the name may soon change to Shoreditch.

Charing Cross: Insert the letter "m" into the name Charing, and you have an instant description of this village. Half-timbered and half not, it ambles from the foot of the valley (where the railway and the A20 roar) towards the Downs. The chief attraction is the ruined Archbishop's Palace, a 15th-century manor-house which has been subsumed into a working farm.

Kennington: The Kennington Loop is a legendary part of the Underground, a circle beneath London SE11 where Northern Line trains turn around for the journey back to Barchet. (Some commuters maintain that a certain proportion are lost *en route*, which helps to explain the dismal delays on the capital's worst tube line.) The loop around Kennington, Kent, is altogether more rewarding.

First, though, you have to find it - as tricky a job as tracking down a Mill Hill East train at Camden Town. Kennington is just north of Ashford, separated by a six-lane motorway. Even when you locate the village, the start of the Kennington circuit is blighted by ungainly housing estates whose roads mock the countryside they obliterate with names like The Pasture. (St John's Wood, on the Jubilee Line, tells a similar fib.)

As the circumnavigation continues, things improve. St Mary's Church is cut off from suburbia by some flamboyant overgrowth, and reached through an arcade of deepest green. Beyond it, Ashford cricket club plays in a more attractive arena than London's Kennington Oval, and instead of a gas-holder, the view is of an *en route* house or two.

You continue the loop past some fetching cottages, whose weather-beaten red roofs, on closer inspection, to be a collage of browns and dusty golds, off-whites and stray greens. Then, you emerge on to the inner circle, a massive meadow devoted to summer lazing. Idlers are provided with a carpet of buttercups, and an expansive oak or two for shade or shelter from that menacing cloud.

I came home from the nearest station, Wye. A permanent (and unsifted) second-hand book sale is in progress there, with a box for contributions to a nearby home for the elderly. You don't find that sort of thing at Oxford Circus.



Warren Street: The thoroughfare that gives this Downland village its name could hardly be more different from the Warren Street in London WC1, which is a grimy side street several notches less impressive even than Edgeware Road and Chancery Lane.

The appeal of Warren Street, Kent, is summed up in the sign decorating the village pub, the Harrow: a ploughman, carving lazily across the North Downs - a dreamily agrarian vision beneath a benign sky. Warren Street has just enough critical mass to possess a post-box, as well as a pub, but the rewards of this metropolis lie beyond The Warren. The Gables and the contented white clapboard of Fairview Cottage. The wheat fields are full of plump, golden ears bursting to be harvested, compensating admirably for the now

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A year of white-out

By Stephen Wood

The skiing season is over. At least, it is for me: this is my last column. But just because there are only a few weeks left in the winter brochures, that doesn't mean you have to stop skiing. There is always a mountain somewhere with snow on it, if you don't mind travelling further than usual, and spending more money. So, in case you get desperate in one or all of the next eight months, I have prepared the following off-season skiing programme. Prices are per person per week unless otherwise stated.

April: North America
No problem here, because Neilson offers departures until 11 April to Breckenridge (£753, based on two sharing at the Lodge), subject to availability of scheduled seats, and even later (18 April) to Lake Louise in Canada, where a "fireplace suite" at the Lake Louise Inn costs £665 (room only, with two sharing).

May: glacier skiing in the Alps
Glacier skiing is popular with Continental skiers, and with racers training in the off-season; but there is not enough demand among British skiers to justify ski-tour operators offering package holidays. So you usually have to make your own travel arrangements. May and June are the best months to go, before the weather gets too hot; but even then the snow can be unpleasantly slushy by midday. Which are the resorts to go to? Martin Bell, Britain's most successful Olympic ski-racer, evaluates 33 European glaciers in the current issue of the *Daily Mail Ski Magazine*,

picking out Hintertux in Austria, Zermatt in Switzerland and Tignes in France as the best. If you can't be bothered to make all the arrangements, Alpine Tours often has a few spare seats on its group-booked coach trips: on 24 May it has three coaches going to the Stubai glacier in Austria, with B&B packages from £344.

June: Scandinavia
For 1996/7, Ski Scandinavia has produced its first year-round skiing brochure, running from November '96 to September '97. For the first half of June it offers two packages to Riksgransen in Sweden, recommended for intermediate-to-advanced skiers. The resort is 20 miles inside the Arctic Circle, so, twice a week, the ski-lifts also run at night-time. The cost of impressing your friends is £85.

July: Argentina
Most serious summer skiing takes place in the southern hemisphere. Journey Latin America is offering packages to Las Lenas in Argentina, a purpose-built ski resort 2,225m up in the Andes. The snow there is dry and powdery, with an average depth of 6.3m; and one of the 40 runs is 1km long, with a vertical drop of 1,220m. (I am reading from the brochure here because, sadly, I have never skied farther south than Lebanon.) The Journey Latin America package costs £755, for room only in a "tourist class" hotel.

August: Chile
A step up from Las Lenas is La Parva, in Chile. The skiing goes up to 3,630m;



Sunshine Day Lodge, Banff: North America keeps the action going in April

SKISHOOT-OFFSHOOT

the price of Passage to South America's guided tour packages reaches about £1,900 for a 10-day, full-board trip, with seven days' skiing. La Parva is linked to two other resorts, one of which, Valle Nevado, is even higher. Heli-skiing is available; and - if you are rich enough to take the whole family - there is an all-day ski school for children from three years old. Passage to South America has two departures, on 4 and 11 August.

September: Australia
You'll have to make your own way to Australia, and then on to the ski areas of Victoria and New South Wales. I haven't been able to find any tour operator offering ski packages from the UK. On the other hand, the Australian Tourist Commission produces a 13-page guide to skiing in Australia, with descriptions of the resorts and contact lists for transport companies, accommodation and local ski-tour operators. There is even a page on Tasmania, although it probably wouldn't be wise

to book a week's skiing there: the guide admits that snow conditions are "unpredictable".

October: New Zealand
The skiing season at New Zealand's Ski Ruapehu runs into November, and the resort offers the added excitement of having a semi-active volcano beneath the snow. Mount Hutt and Queens-town may be a little marginal this month, since the resorts close at the end of October; on the other hand they (but not Ski Ruapehu) are both featured in the Mount Cook Line Ski Express brochure, which offers six-day skiing packages for from £290 (room only). If that seems cheap, it's because you have to pay your own way to Christchurch - the package begins only when you get on to the transfer bus.

November: Finland
Back to Europe, as the winter closes in. Finland may have the biggest downhill skiing area in the Arctic Circle, at Yllas,

but it's not very far downhill, because the top of the resort is only 718m high. The surrounding area, however, is magical, and the seriously underpopulated cross-country tracks (stretching a total of 250km) offer an ideal opportunity to get fit for the following month. Norvika's packages to Yllas start at about £650.

And December? Just get your edges sharpened, and go where you're going. The winter brochures are to be published in April, so you will have had seven months to choose your destination.

Contacts: Neilson Holidays (0113-239 4555); Alpine Tours (01227-454777); Ski Scandinavia (0116-275 2750); Journey Latin America (0181-747 8315); Passage to South America (0181-767 8989); Australian Tourist Commission brochure line (0990 561434); New Zealand Travel Information Service (0181-748 4455); Mount Cook Line (0181-741 5652); Norvika (0171-409 7334).

Go jump on a board

Until snowboarding came along, the glaciers of the Alps were lonely places in the summer. A few, such as those of Solden and Tignes, provided a ski racers' Lanzarote - a place to train off-season. But generally, while ski resorts teem with walkers, bikers, climbers and sightseers from the Far East throughout the hot months, you rarely see someone Robocopping to the cable car in ski boots.

The mushrooming of boarding, though, has transformed certain mountain idylls. Kaunertal, for example, a remote valley off the main road between Innsbruck and St Anton, was once so neglected by skiers in summer that tumbledweed rolled across the moraine and the ski patroller was Lee Van Cleef. Then the Austrian Snowboard Association took over the glacier and now it thrives with riders taking advantage of the school, rental shop and board-testing programme.

The reason snowboarders like the summer is that the two restrictions that put skiers off do not bother them. Clocking up piste miles has never been a priority on a board. You can extract far more from each trail fast-carving it on one run; meandering down it on another, doing spins, riding backwards and performing other ground tricks; or "scoping" it for hits to jump off. So the fact that you may only have 20km of piste to play with really doesn't matter. The short skiing day is no problem, either: in the icy morning you can take advantage of the curving propensities of the new generation of boards, and you can stay out later in the afternoon because one wide surface performs better in slush than two narrow ones. You'll still come down the mountain at about 2pm, but that suits the chilled nature of snowboarding - particularly if you are learning. You'll appreciate the chance to rest muscles you were previously unaware of.

If you're already a competent rider, summer ski areas are the place to start working on your free-style skills, as most resorts with a glacier maintain half pipes and fun parks through the summer. Two resorts are highly recommended for summer boarding: Les Deux Alpes. France has a long, gentle glacier served by a breather-providing funicular train - ideal for learning. It is also home to a branch of Chalet Snowboard (14 June to 30 August, 01235 767182), the specialist tour operator, where the chief instructor of British snowboarding, Martin Drayton, offers expert guidance to the uninitiated. In the afternoons, Chalet Snowboard also lays on mountain biking.

For more of a hard-core, free-style scene, concentrate their activities on the fun park. Saus Fee, Switzerland has the biggest and best fun park in Europe. It comes in two chunks connected by a tunnel through the ice. There are three half pipes (separating first-timers from experts), a gang of differently shaped jumps, a boardercross course (lots of banked corners and rollers), a "beach" bar and a booming sound system mounted on a snowcat. Who needs Ibiza?

Chris Madigan

something to declare

Trouble spots

Watertight tickets

Life for Greek island-hoppers is about to become more complicated - but possibly safer - following a change in ticketing rules for ships. In the new edition of *Greek Island Hopping 1997*, author Frewin Poffey reports: "Until this spring it was possible to buy tickets from quayside vendors or on the ferry itself as well as

regular ticket agents. Things changed when the car ferry *Olympia Express* (licensed capacity 1,200) had her captain arrested at Piraeus for trying to sail with 2,725 passengers on board. A presidential decree was issued requiring all ferry operators to bring in a computer ticket system by 31 March 1997."

True or false:

The brandy barrel carried by St Bernards in the Alps is a myth

True, according to the monks who still keep a 900-year-old hospice running at the top of the 8,114-ft pass of the Col de Grand St-Bernard.

As far as they can tell, the idea grew up many decades ago after a stuffed hero of the passes, Barry, was left in the basement of a Swiss museum. Museum workers used to eat their lunches in the basement, and, it seems, one of them left his portable wine barrel hanging round Barry's neck. The barrel was found when the museum rehabilitated the famous dog, and, judging it picturesque, the curators left it there. The rest is history.

Hugh Pope

Bargain of the week

Sweden has never been a budget traveller's destination, but Ryanair (0541-569 569) intends to make it a bargain break from this summer. The low-fare airline is beginning services from London Stansted to Stockholm's Skavsta airport, charging £99 return plus £5.90 tax.

In addition, the airline has negotiated fares of £7 return for

the Stunsted Skytrain from London Liverpool Street to the Essex airport, and a £10 round-trip fare for the bus ride into the Swedish capital.

At present, the best fare from British Airways (0345 222111) is a World Offer of £129 plus tax, which must be booked by next Wednesday, 26 March. It is valid for travel until 16 May.

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The choice of vessels on which to cruise will be the MS Serenade, the MS Solen and the MS Glory. April/May is one of the best times to travel to Egypt from a weather point of view and if, like most people, a Nile cruise has always been on your list of Classic Journeys and you are able to travel at fairly short notice, then this is surely an opportunity that should not be missed.

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Now for a French nursery tale

Removal vans have never played much of a part in my life. We've only ever had two houses and when we moved into the first, from a rented house 200 yards away, we shunted our few possessions down the hill in a wheelbarrow. The pram helped, too. In our lives, babies and house moves seem always to have gone together.

So it was with a sense of awe that I listened to Carol Strafford and John Worrall who, at the end of this month, are packing up not only home, furniture, books, cooking pots and cats, but also an entire plant nursery. They are moving to France, to a small village just north of Saumur in the Loire valley. With them will come 3,000 stock plants, dug up from their present site near Wimborne in Dorset, and about 5,000 pots of plants for sale, which will form the nucleus of the new venture.

Archangel Plants specialises in interesting perennials: good aquilegias, old wallflowers such as 'Bloody Warrior', fine monardas, phlox, salvia, poppies (including the sumptuous dusky 'Patty's Plum') and red-hot pokers. For the last four years, all the propagating and most of the selling (apart from weekend stalls by John) has been done by Carol. Now John is giving up his job as a prison counsellor and they are going to run the nursery together.

Which came first, I asked? The desire to go to France or giving up the counselling? As it turned out, neither. The story starts with a fortune teller who read Carol's palm and told her that France was John's spiritual home. Carol looks slightly sheepish telling me this, as sensible people do when admitting to something as deliciously irrational as having their fortunes told.

But it all seemed to fit. The nursery needed to expand. There was no possibility of buying extra land close to their present site. They had looked in vain for another small holding in this country that they could take over. And although Carol says she can't speak a word of French, John, indeed, does confess to a kind of unspoken affinity with France and the French.

How will she cope? "As long as I've got plants, I don't care what goes on around me," Carol replies. "It's not going to be that different from my life here. And it's odd, but everything seems to have gone our way since we made the decision to go."

Earlier this year, they took a week off to look for their future in France. To a certain extent, the area chose itself. They didn't want to go far south, because it would be difficult to continue to grow the plants they like. They wanted to remain within striking distance of this country, so that they could do a few shows in the south of England



Uprooting for France: Carol Strafford and John Worrall of Archangel Plants. PHOTO: JOHN LAWRENCE

each summer and keep their name alive with their English customers. They wanted to be near a good local market in France, where they could sell plants regularly.

After only two days of searching, they left their hearts on a D road at Moulherne. La Pommerie (I saw the photographs) is a low, colour-washed house with three acres of land and the possibility of

renting more. There are two lakes, a stream, plenty of wild euphorbias (which was a good guide to what they could expect to grow), and soil fast draining over tufa rock. Most of the nursery ground is presently covered in couch and bramble. But there is a glie attached to the property which could provide an income while the nursery is finding its feet. "And there are wonderful decidu-

ous oaks. A bit of pine..." says John dreamily.

The area is full of small market gardeners. If vegetables grew well there, they reasoned, so would their plants. Nobody in the area seemed to be growing garden plants for sale, so they do not feel they will have much competition.

What will they do differently in their new nursery, I wondered?

What does it take to transplant a business?

By Anna Pavord

"Watering," said Carol instantly. At the moment they haul a hose around from a single standpipe outside their back door. In France, they will put in automatic irrigation. "And a mechanised trolley," said John, in a way that was more of a question than a statement. Carol made a face. The trolley is evidently still a matter for negotiation.

Given the incredibly long hours, the sudden deaths caused by harsh winters and drought summers, the difficulty of earning an income that approaches even the minimum wage for agricultural labourers, you wonder why anyone ever wants a nursery of their own. But it has been one of the marvels of the last decade that, alongside the growth of the garden centre, there has been an equal growth in the number of small, specialist nurseries such as Archangel Plants.

The nursery was a dream that Carol and John had 15 years ago, when they were both students of horticulture at Cannington College in Somerset. Carol went on to

work at Kew and then joined a wholesale nursery. John went first into horticultural therapy, then into even more demanding territory, rehabilitating drug addicts and alcoholics.

Carol set up her own nursery, she said, because she "didn't like being told what to do". That makes her sound much more bullish than she generally appears. But it was also the only way she could get to grow the plants she liked best. Fortunately those also happened to be the plants that are most in favour at the moment: herbaceous perennials. Growing plants, she says, is the easy bit. The part she hates is the selling. That is where John comes in.

So wish them luck this summer, as they unpack their crates of campanulas and anemones, sages and sedums, and settle them into French soil. And pay them a visit if you are going to the Loire valley. They will be at La Pommerie, 49300 Moulherne, near Saumur. Look for them on the left-hand side of the D279 on leaving Moulherne.

Flower of the hour, *Pulsatilla* 'Lewis Palmer'.

All the lungworts are good, but this is the best of all the ones that are flowering in my garden at the moment, with flowers of a gorgeous true blue and leaves splashed and spotted with silver. This month, *Pulsatillas* concentrate on producing their flowers, which, in most of the cultivars, drift indeliberately from pink to blue. 'Sissinghurst White' is the best of the whites. Later they turn their attention to their leaves, and these - large, hairy and mottled to varying degrees with silver - provide excellent ground cover through the summer. In this way, the variegated *Pulsatillas* are better value than types such as

'Munstead Blue' which have coarse green leaves, though flowers of a piercing azure in spring. 'Lewis Palmer' grows about a foot high and spreads over about 18 inches. It does well in shade, but prefers damp soil to dry.

Remember the Newton-Golding family? They were the subject of a Workshop piece (*The Independent*, 13 January 1996) when they moved from London to Hartwell End Farm in Northamptonshire and found themselves with a vast sea of concrete instead of a garden at their front door. We talked about various solutions - making raised beds, digging out planting holes in the concrete bed - but in the long term, I

thought the only solution was to get rid of the stuff. Quotes from contractors in Dorset suggested that the cost of breaking up the area (30yd x 14yd once space for a new drive had been taken out) would be around £1,700.

Eileen Newton-Golding recently wrote to say how they had been getting on over the past year. It hasn't been an easy one. "What you had to say fitted in with what we had all been feeling," she says. "And I would love to be able to tell you that we have wonderful trees growing in the front now. If only!"

"We approached several contractors for quotes. The cheapest (I kid you not) was £5,500. The cost was higher

than your estimate, partly because the contractors were unsure how deep the reinforcement under the concrete would be, but mostly because of the cost of dumping the waste." That was interesting. The contractors I had talked to all knew of free landfill sites where hardcore was needed. Dumping did not represent a cost.

"So," continues Mrs Newton-Golding, "we decided to go for the cheaper option of punching holes through the concrete and we had every intention of completing the

work before last autumn, but frankly, we ran out of time." That wasn't surprising. Both the Newton-Goldings commute to London and as well as the two acre garden, they have a vast complement of animals - sheep, horses, dogs, cats, chickens and two heifers - to look after as well.

The good news is that they have bought the wood at the end of their land. But, as Mrs Newton-Golding pointed out, that has absorbed much of the cash available for the garden. "We wanted to preserve the

wood, to stop it from being felled and leaving us open to the ML, but also because it is such a lovely thing to have. Our fears about the felling may not have been misplaced..."

"Friends are still offering alternative uses for our concrete. Back to swimming pools and tennis courts again. One suggested fencing it in, sanding it over and using it as a manage. One idea perhaps has some mileage in it. A friend of ours has done it in his yard. He only needed access to his barn a few times a year, so he devised a system of large sewer-pipe sections, each on a pallet on wheels, so when necessary he can move his trees out of the way. A neat idea, but we couldn't cope with the neces-

sary watering. It might be a solution though if we find something really terrible underneath the concrete. "But we will get the work done. We are having fencing done at the moment, to match the fence along the drive. We have also started to plant a beech hedge along the patch of grass outside the house. I am going to train apricot trees against the wall and we are planning to plant apple trees near the barn. The area we had hoped to turn into a small orchard is too full of rubble - yes, more concrete which needs to be dug out - so that's on hold a bit longer." I don't doubt they'll get there in the end. They have the rest of their lives to do it.

Travel from the tropics to the tundra in search of botanical treasures. And all within the confines of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Experienced garden guides are leading walks on the wild-side from today until 4 April. Meet at the West Gate, Arboretum Place at either 11am or 2pm. Admission is £2. Tomorrow at 2.30pm at the Botanic there is another tour based on plants that changed the world. What links aspidistra with Sauchiehall St? How did Palmolive soap get its name? Which periwinkle cures cancer? Admission for this tour is £4. Meet at the West Gate, as above. For more details phone Heather Paul on 0131-552 7171.

Dreaming of daffodils

Patricia Cleveland-Peck offers a golden excuse for a visit to Gloucestershire in spring

Wordsworth's famous hosts of golden daffodils still dance beside Ullswater in the Lake District but the true Mecca for wild daffodils in England is a little-known corner of north-west Gloucestershire, bounded by the villages of Oxenhall, Dymock and Kempeley. The area has such a spectacular annual display of daffodils that at one time the Great Western Railway ran special day-excursion trains to bring trippers in to enjoy the sight. People from as far afield as Bristol and Birmingham returned in their charabancs laden with armfuls of the flowers, and gypsies converged on the woods with hessian sacks which they filled with uprooted bulbs to sell in the cities. The local poet John Masefield vividly captured this image:

*And there the pickers come, picking for town
Those dancing daffodils: all day they pick;
Hard featured women, weather beaten
brown*

Or swarthy red, the colour of old brick. Local people also benefited from the abundant seasonal harvest by selling bunches from farm gates. Even cycling clubs organised picking jaunts. "You could follow the trails of dropped flowers for miles," recalls Robert Biscoe, a 73-year old local resident. "Now the daffodils have declined a lot, but when I was a boy at Pickleghash school, we picked them every year for the London hospitals. We would take bunches to school and then all parade down to the Comrades' Club where they were boxed up. They were then taken to Newent station and put on the London train... The London hospitals would then reply, thanking us, and the letters were pinned up on the board in the Comrades' Club." Mr Biscoe's ancestors were Huguenot weavers and linen-workers who came to Gloucestershire in the 1770s. He thinks it possible that they settled in this area because of their trade, as daffodils were at one time used as a dyestuff.

The wild daffodil, or Lent lily, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, is a particularly lovely native flower, a true harbinger of spring with its small, two-tone yellow trumpets and fresh-green foliage. At one time it grew so profusely throughout Cheddar, London in 1581 wrote: "...the country women offer the blossoms in great abundance for sale and all the taverns may be seen decked out with this flower." It continued to grow prolifically over a large area until the early decades of this century, when it went into a rapid decline, leaving only local pockets of growth.

This area of Gloucestershire has remained unspoiled is not entirely fortuitous, for in a quiet way a lot of effort has been put into its preservation. A successful road campaign was conducted with the backing of the Council for the Protection of Rural

England, which helped to save the daffodil woods from being bisected by an extension to the A40. The proposed road, which would have helped to link the M50 with the M4, was considered by local people to be totally unnecessary and impracticable, running as it would over land which was regularly flooded by the Severn. The daffodil area was but a fraction of the whole, but the campaign succeeded because all interested groups along its length linked up and kept the protest firmly in public view. In March 1994 the proposal disappeared from the roads programme, ostensibly due to lack of money.

The last "Daffodil Special" train ran in 1959 and picking wild flowers is now regarded as environmentally unacceptable, but local people, who are proud of their heritage, still welcome visitors to enjoy the spring ritual. A series of "daffodil teas" are held in village halls and organised walks take place over relevant weekends during the daffodil season. If you are feeling really energetic, one of the best ways to see the display is to follow the "daffodil way", which was set up on the initiative of the Windcross public paths project with support from national and local authorities and the co-operation of local landowners. This 10-mile walk traces a roughly circular path along rights of way and lanes, passing orchards, meadows, woods and brooks. At this time of year, daffodils are never far from sight, but equipped with a brochure (see below) which contains a map and clear instructions, you will discover many other interesting things along the way. You pass the vestiges of an 18th-century canal, a 19th-century railway, and many old buildings including part of an Elizabethan farmhouse, the 14th-century church of St Mary's Dymock with its shingled steeple, and Kempeley old church, referred to by John Betjeman as "a miniature cathedral of the Arts and Craft movement", which contains interesting medieval frescoes. There is a convenient pub, the Beauchamp Arms, for a pause for refreshment, and if you don't feel up to the full 10 miles, plenty of short cuts can be made following the link paths on the map. It is a walk you won't forget.

Daffodil weekends:
22-23 March, Oxenhall. Teas to raise funds for St Anne's Church. Also sales of home-made cakes, scones, jam etc.
29-30 March, Dymock. Two-mile guided walk on Sunday from Dymock parish hall, returning to the parish hall for tea.
5-6 April, Kempeley. Guided walks from the village hall, 11am and 2pm each day. See the medieval frescoes in the church. Refreshments and produce, village hall, 11am-2pm.
The Daffodil Way, 50p, and other brochures from Tourist Information Centre, Church Street, Newent (01531 82246).

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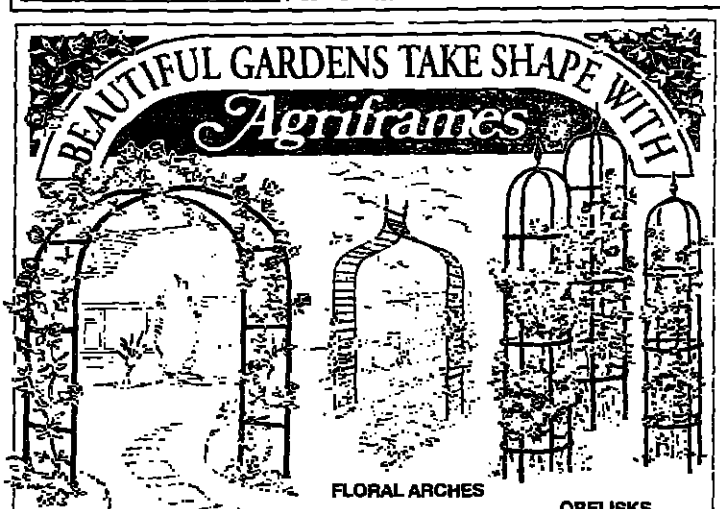
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Drained, sprayed, and flattened

The countryside is under threat. The story of Barbara Sutton and the family smallholding which was razed for efficiency is typical of the march of 'progress'. Jack O'Sullivan reports

When Barbara Sutton was a child in the Fifties, her summers were spent idyllically on her grandparents' 300-acre farm near Skegness, beneath the big skies of the Lincolnshire fens. Her days were spent on the back of Peggy, the family's shire horse, charged with ploughing and harrowing the rich, arable soils at the back of Ingoldmells near Addlethorpe. Each morning she would help milk the 20 cows so early that, on returning for breakfast, she would hear "Good Morning Campers", drifting across the land from the Butlins camp on the coast. Then there would be haymaking, and in the evening milking again, before heading home to a farmhouse that had no electricity, a single cold water tap, a single gas lamp and beds specially made up for the children out of birds' feathers.

"It was a perfect life," she recalls. "Paradise." But earlier this week, we travelled with Mrs Sutton to the site of the old farm. Where once there were orchards of plums, apples and cherries, there is nothing. The willow that stood beside the bridge over a dike has now gone. Indeed, there isn't even a farm gate. All the trees have been uprooted, save one sycamore which looks, after being struck by lightning, like the sole survivor of a massacre. The hedges that surrounded the settlement are gone. Of the farmhouse and outbuildings, bulldozed in the Sixties, there is not a trace. All that remains are vast, featureless fields – a prairie that wouldn't look out of place in America's Midwest, drained, sprayed, artificially fertilised, tidied, a land devoid of insects, birds, wild mammals and people. Where there were once five small farms leading from a sleepy lane, there is just one, consolidated agribusiness, where the only thing that moves across the monotonous landscape is a huge tractor.

Yet this is supposed to be a model of British agricultural success. A land that has produced huge profits from decades of EU grain subsidies and more recently has cashed in on the explosion of prices on the world market.

"I don't come back very often," says Mrs Sutton, whose family sold up in 1961. "I feel so sad when I visit. To me this particular spot is like hallowed ground. No one can take it away from me, because I have my memories. But I've always wondered what happened to a tin we buried in concrete, when my step-grandfather built an extension to the milking parlour. We left a few things in that tin, messages and so on, which we thought would be there for 1,000 years. We didn't realise the whole place would be gone in five years."

Mrs Sutton's tale has been played out across Britain since the Second World War, when the first of many incentives for intensive farming led farmers to forsake traditional mixed farming in favour of industrial techniques owing more to ICT's laboratories than to history's great agricultural innovators – Turnip Townshend, Robert Bakewell and Jethro Tull.



The way it was (above): the house and the old hay rick. Right: Mrs Sutton on the site of her home. Only the sycamore remains to remind her of her childhood



PICTURE: KEITH DOBNEY

A fierce indictment of post-war husbandry has been published by Graham Harvey, better known for nostalgic images of the shires, cultivated in *The Archers*, of which Harvey is the agricultural story editor. His book, *The Killing of the Countryside*, is a call to arms for lovers of Britain's countryside, a plea to save from the "grim reapers" of modern farming the riches that inspired Edith Holden to write *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*, and to avoid a future more reminiscent of TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*.

Perhaps most worrying about the book are its predictions of what may be coming next. For if you think that, in the era of "set-aside" and food surpluses, agribusiness has done its worst to the countryside, Harvey will put you straight. He warns that Britain faces, with the active collusion of government, even greater intensification of farming. Big landowners, he says, now seek to drive down costs so Britain can compete against the US in the great new grain export markets of China and Asia where affluence is bringing huge increases in the demand for meat and, with it, demand for grain animal feeds. In short, you ain't seen nothing yet if you fear the rural landscape being turned into an industrialised desert.

There is an alternative to this nightmarish prospect. The images of a different future can be found in isolated spots where farmers with a devotion to the land keep faith with older ideals than profit and loss accounts.

This week, Rosamund Young was enjoying just such a vision on the 390-acre farm she works with her mother Mary and her brother Richard. The farm, near Broadway in Worcestershire, across the Vale of Evesham, is a haven for wildlife. The tall, unclipped hedges and long, uncut verges at Kite's Nest Farm are providing shelter for an explosion of spring wild flowers: violets, wood anemones, primroses, dog's mercury. In a week or so the bluebells will be out, along with the first of the orchids, to be followed later by wood sorrel and then, in the summer, Dyer's greenweed, a very rare, low, broom-like plant with yellow flowers.

As you drive through the farm, dozens of ground-nesting yellowhammers rise up from the meadows and a charm of goldfinches feed on thistleheads. The songbirds have found their voices among the herd of cattle, with animals of all ages, that graze in the pastures. Kite's Nest seems more like a nature reserve than a conventional farm.

This oasis has grown directly out of the Youngs' farming methods, which reject the intensive techniques of modern agriculture. No pesticides, crop sprays, artificial fertilisers, special hormones, antibiotic growth promoters or feed from ground animal carcasses are used on their organic farm.

"As a family we are desperately worried about the damage being done to the land by farming today," says Rosamund Young. "Even at the expense of profit, we are letting areas grow wild." So, for example, the hedges are spared the annual brutalities of the flail mow, a device which has served the obsessive tidiness of so many farmers by cutting hedgerows down to a level that offers scant cover for nesting birds and inadequate breaks against winter winds.

But perhaps the most unusual scene at Kite's Nest is the cattle. "We allow the cattle to live in extended families. They look after each other. Grandmothers teach their daughters how to bring up their children. They choose a nice place. The cattle stand together for hours, as if in conversation, before a calf is born. The older ones teach the young where the water troughs are, where the best grass is, how to get shelter from the cold. They

need much less help from us. Whereas if you separate them by age, having a field, say, of one-year-olds, you get the same problems as if you leave children alone – a herd of delinquent boys who, instead of grazing calmly, roam around looking for something to do."

The Youngs don't raise cattle for milk – except to serve their personal needs – and they ensure that a calf is suckled for a year before a sibling is born. They have been surprised to discover – as has the local vet – that none of their animals has worms, even though no prophylactic drugs are added to feed. (Most British farm animals and many domestic ones have worms, providing a huge market for pharmaceutical products.) The farm's worm-free status is believed to be linked to the wide range of land over which the cattle can graze and the immunities passed on to calves by a long period of suckling (they are about four months old before they eat much grass).

Slaughter is performed as humanely as possible. Calves are taken only when weaned, and normally when a cow already has other calves. An appointment for first thing in the morning is made at the nearest abattoir, while it is still fresh from its overnight cleaning. The cattle are trans-

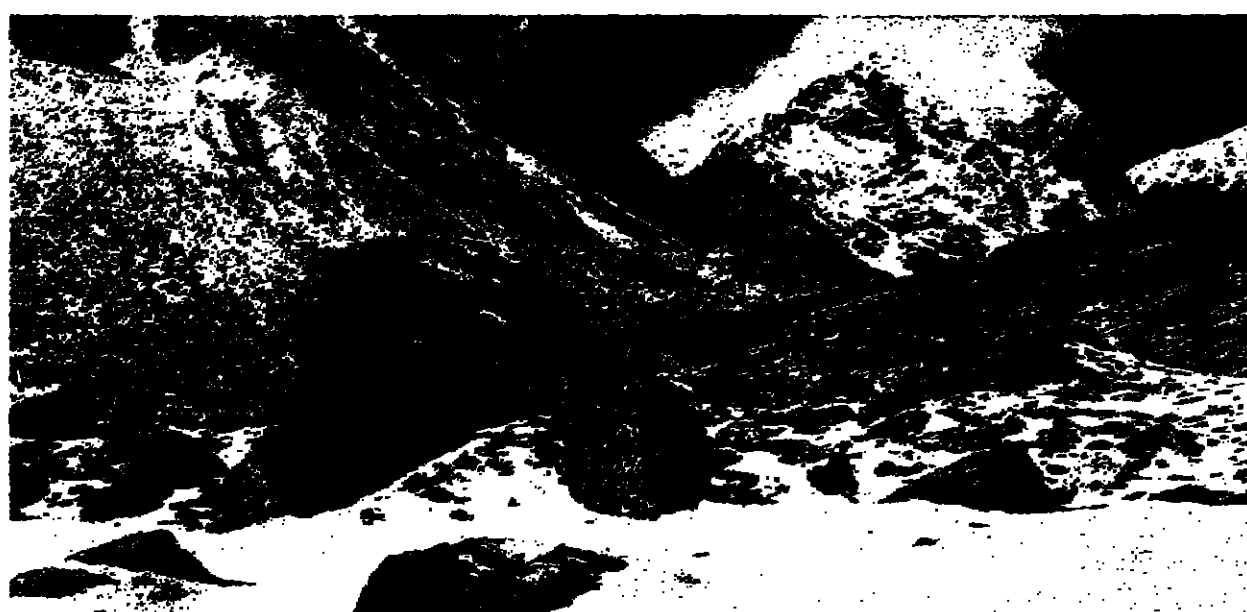
ported in pairs and killed within minutes of arrival. The meat is then brought back to the farm for butchering.

There has never been a case of BSE on the farm. Indeed, artificial feed – the source of BSE – has not been used on the farm since 1967, when Mary Young was horrified to discover, only after Poirot-style detective work, that cattle cake comprised ground-up chicken bones and chicken manure, laced with aniseed to mask the taste.

It isn't an easy life. Rosamund Young says that none of the family has had a day off in five years. Sixteen-hour days are the norm. And the recession was hard on organic produce, killing off many small shops which had been opened in expectation of sales taking off.

But customers now travel hundreds of miles to buy produce direct from Kite's Nest Farm. £3.05 a pound for stewing steak and £3.98 for topside doesn't seem much to pay for the finest food and a safer, more beautiful countryside. Barbara Sutton, in Lincolnshire, would certainly not flinch at it if she could have saved her childhood dream from obliteration.

The Killing of the Countryside, by Graham Harvey, is published by Jonathan Cape, price £17.99.



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Feathers fly in raptor debate

Last autumn a gamekeeper confided to me that he had recently shot four buzzards in the space of 30 seconds as they emerged from a raid on his pheasant pen. "A double right-and-left!" he said, not without satisfaction. Yet his memory of the incident was tinged with anxiety, for he knew that if he had been detected, he would have been liable to a heavy fine.

Dozens of gamekeepers all over Britain have no doubt taken the law into their own hands in similar fashion during the past year. Whether they have shot a sparrowhawk, poked out a goshawk's nest or trampled a hen harrier's eggs into oblivion, they are goaded by the belief that birds of prey have become intolerably numerous.

Many other country people share their conviction, and none more vociferously than John Pugh, a Breconshire hill farmer who recently held an open day at his home near Rhyader to encourage discussion of conservation issues. The fact that more than 60 people turned out was in itself a reflection of widespread concern: many were sympathetic farmers, but the company included several representatives of national organisations, not least one from Mr Pugh's *bête noire*, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The main purpose of the day was to make professional conservationists face the realities of country life, from which Mr Pugh reckons they are far removed, and in particular to stir up the debate about raptors which is coming to the boil countrywide.

The RSPB has just brought out *Birds of Prey in the UK – Back from the Brink*, a report showing that most species of raptor have increased significantly in recent years.

Sparrow-hawks, for instance, are now thought to number 35,000 pairs, and peregrines have recovered from the nadir of the Sixties, to which they were reduced by organochlorine pesticides, to 1,300 pairs, the highest total recorded this century. The same document insists that full legal protection of raptors must be maintained. It also records a steep fall in the numbers of songbirds: skylarks, song thrushes, tree sparrows and bullfinches have all gone down by more than 50 per cent in the past 25 years. Yet the RSPB attributes their demise to inimical

farming practices, and concludes that "sparrowhawks are not a significant cause of these declines". Such remarks are red rags to the likes of John Pugh, who maintains that members of the RSPB are no better than "blood sports enthusiasts". He claims that, by supporting the obsessive protection of raptors, they are in effect promoting mass slaughter every day of the year.

"Who are they to say that I cannot have peewits and curlews on my land?" he demands. "Who are they to say that I cannot have bullfinches in my hedges? Why should I have all these hawks killing everything?"

He points out that the RSPB already culls magpies and crows on some of its reserves, and now he is calling for an immediate change in the law which would enable landowners to take out licences for culling peregrines, sparrowhawks and goshawks. He maintains that his crusade is gathering support, and predicts that if no positive action is taken within the next few months, an alternative, more realistic bird society will come into being, with 50,000 domestic pigeon fanciers as instant starter members.



The killing of buzzards, if detected, can incur heavy fines

Less aggressive lobbyists are surprised, to put it mildly, that the RSPB has fired off its latest broadside without awaiting the report of the five-year joint raptor study now coming to an end at Langholm, the Duke of Buccleuch's estate in Dumfriesshire. The aim of this major investigation, in which the RSPB itself has been taking part, along with the Game Conservancy Trust, the Institute for Terrestrial Ecology and other bodies, is to study the interaction of grouse and harriers. Its conclusions are eagerly awaited, and will be the talking-point of the summer.

Meanwhile, here on the Cotswold escarpment, my neighbour has just lost his eighth tumbler pigeon in as many weeks to our resident sparrowhawk, which flickers up and down the lane like a grey shadow. Unlike John Pugh, Dave takes his losses calmly, reckoning that he has to live in harmony with nature. But not everyone is that philosophical, and fireworks are to be expected.

The game of life

Jake Fiennes, a gamekeeper (and brother of the more famous Ralph), explains how raising birds for shooting improves the wild habitat

Winter's spell is broken. The earth stirs. Leaves burst, buds erupt. Songbirds herald dawn and a woodpecker taps a steady rhythm on the bark of an old oak. A barn owl skims the edges of the churchyard, swooping in search of a scurrying mouse. The morning mist evaporates. Another working day! No lengthy queues, no rush hour, no road rage, no deadlines. PCs, faxes and mobile phones are aliens to this world.

My workplace of 4,500 acres in Norfolk is an oasis of hedges, woods, spinneys and dew ponds, cosseted and cocooned from the surrounding desert of wheat fields, fume-filled roads and antennae, sodium-orange-lit villages. This is an ecosystem managed primarily for game birds, with huge fringe benefits to others.

Being a gamekeeper on a wild bird shoot is not solely about controlling predators. It is about creating a suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds. It's about control, not destruction. It's about management, not dissaray. The months of March to July are probably the most magical and important to me. I aim to ensure a successful breeding season for all the birds, although this is not always assured due to unpredictable weather patterns. Keepers work closely with the farming team on lay-outs of brooder crops, field margins, hedge-cutting plans, management of set-aside and the spraying of herbicides and insecticides. A brooder crop is a spring (or sometimes winter)

crop made up of a mixture of annuals to produce seeds for food and cover for young birds in the summer and autumn. These run adjacent to field margins, a one-and-a-half-metre uncut strip running up a hedge or ditch that provides cover for young birds and also acts as a winter habitat for insect life. High hedges are used as windbreaks, cut only once every two to three years to leave berries for winter food and nesting for songbirds. Herbicides are kept to a minimum and insecticides are seldom sprayed after the middle of June. Insects are vital as part of the diet to promote the healthy growth of young birds.

Woods are split up into small spinneys and belts composed of conifer and deciduous trees. They are thinned every five years and rides are cut each autumn to encourage the growth of wild flowers and help ensure strong, tall trees free of competition.

In addition to managing their habitat, we supplement the birds' diet with hoppers of wheat at which they can feed ad lib. All birds visit these hoppers with increasing frequency in hard weather and rely on them right up until the beginning of May when wild food becomes sufficient.

There is a downside to all this management. The knock-on effect creates an explosion in the population of predators and grazers, which have in turn to be controlled. It's well known that keepers and foxes have little in the way of sympathy



'Would I swap places with a city dweller? No chance'

PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH DOBNEY

for each other. The gorgeous appearance of those red creatures belies the masters of cunning and opportunity that lie within. No keeper would wish to eradicate the fox, but numbers need to be kept to the minimum in sensitive areas. Yes, they do enjoy a tasty bird. Ask anyone who keeps chickens. When fox numbers decrease the rabbit and hare population rise.

Rabbits are not easily tolerated by most farmers and country dwellers; they can cause destruction of crops almost overnight. Suppressing their numbers is an ongoing task. The expression "breeding like rabbits" is apt.

Hares, now, don't seem to cause the same animosity. Have you seen hares dancing in the fields at dusk on a spring evening? There is nothing more enchanting. But, again, if numbers become unacceptable and threaten the balance, there has to be some culling. It is not an enjoyable task, but hares are prone to disease

when numbers increase and it's much better to influence levels than to see slow death occur. We are fortunate, here, that we have a good population of hares, mainly due to sound estate management. Much of the UK is now devoid of them. Stoats, weasels, grey squirrels and rats are also controlled, not to the point of eradication, but just sufficiently to ensure that birds and smaller mammals have a good chance of survival. This also results in a healthy population of raptors. Last year five pairs of barn owls successfully reared their young, and we had numerous tawny owls. Hobbies, merlins, harriers, red kites and buzzards are also frequent visitors to the estate. Restricting the numbers of corvids such as jays, magpies and crows isn't easy, and they can cause major predation to nests. The main preventive measures are to leave verges and ditches uncut to hide nest sites, and to leave hedges to thicken to make access difficult.

Keepers are themselves a rare breed not yet ready for culling, and wild keepers even more so. They are, without doubt, an important part of rural life; dare I say, they are custodians with an in-depth and hands-on knowledge of British wild life. They are part of a system that goes back hundreds of years and, if managed correctly, with care and attention to all animal and plant life, is of utmost benefit to the continuum of wildlife in the countryside. Keepers are at the forefront of the drive to reintroduce the wild grey partridge, and to maintain stocks of pure wild pheasants, which are not as common as many people would imagine. Life and death walk hand-in-hand in the countryside. Predators must be limited, even if only on specially selected sites, in order to encourage species that would otherwise disappear. Grey squirrels, for example, have caused the virtual demise of the red squirrel, and American mink have caused

considerable damage to our waterways. We live on a small island that is virtually overrun by the human race. Since the Industrial Revolution pollution has spiralled. Pollution does not discriminate. Habitats have been lost. Species have had to adapt to a man-made environment of motorways, pylons, and urban and industrial development. Some manage better than others. No longer do we have a village population sustained by agriculture, and academic knowledge alone cannot be a substitute for living and working with nature.

Occupation for many means exchanging time for material gain. Occupation for me is time-consuming, too, but is a privilege. It offers hope for a heritage for our children, an opportunity to redeem some of man's mistakes. It is a chance to give our wild kingdom some oxygenated space and a hope of survival. Would I swap places with a city dweller? No chance.

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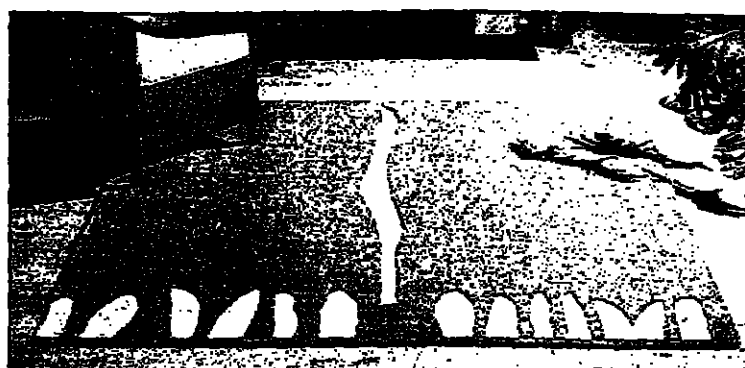
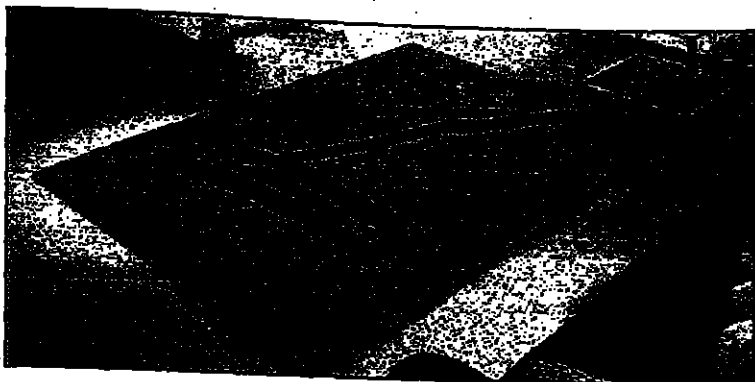
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Designer carpets are the latest word in interior decoration, writes Amicia De Moubray



Christine Van der Hurd has won a reputation for her exuberant and vivid designs, such as the Kashmir hand-knitted rug, right. She uses a variety of means of manufacture

A revolution is taking place underfoot. Carpets are suddenly becoming *de rigueur*. Not fitted carpets, you understand, but designer carpets, with a capital D. In a nation that is interior-decorating mad, it is curious that until recently carpets were largely ignored. Odd, when you consider that carpets are often an integral part of a room's overall appearance. I suspect it is because expertise in carpets is generally regarded as esoteric, and best left to the experts.

Not since the Twenties has there been such a wide choice of rugs available by individual contemporary designers. There has been a great deal more interest in the past year," says Christopher Farr, who has almost single-handedly been responsible for the contemporary rug renaissance. He began as an artist, became a dealer in Oriental rugs, then turned to designing contemporary rugs and is now a dealer in contemporary furniture, and has done much to encourage individual artists to design carpets.

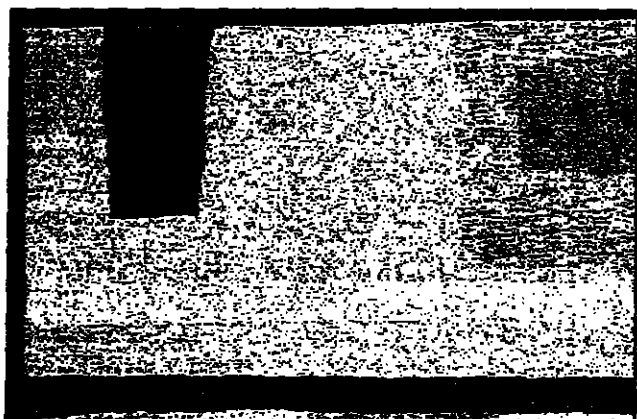
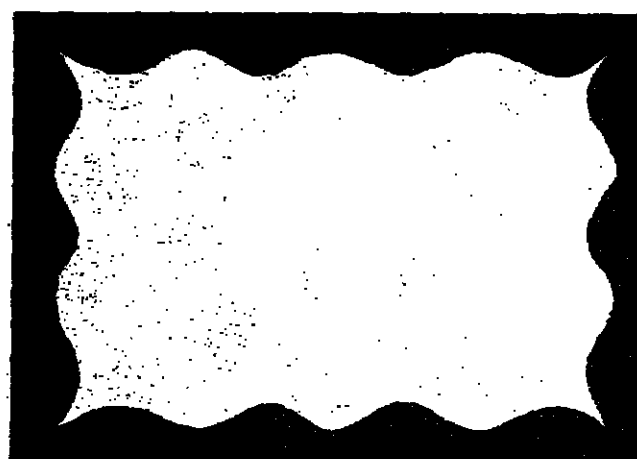
"I realised that the supply of good oriental rugs was dwindling and that there was a potential demand for a more modern product," he says. Gillian Ayres, Kate Blee, Maxime de la Falaise, Josef Herman, Bill Jacklin and a couple of fashion luminaries, Romeo Gigli and Rifat Ozbek, are just a few of an impressive list of designers working with Christopher Farr. The rugs are made up by village craftsmen in Konya, central Turkey, using handspun yarns, natural dyes, and traditional techniques of hand-knotted weaving. "They are modern rugs in the old traditional style. Just because they are modern it doesn't mean the rugs are confined to contemporary interiors; they can look great with wonderful old antiques. The exciting opportunities presented by commissioning designs from living artists and designers is beginning to catch on."

The Matt Collection, by the rug designer Helen Yardley, a range of five rugs all costing less than £1,000 (two of them less than £500), was launched at 100% Design in October last year.

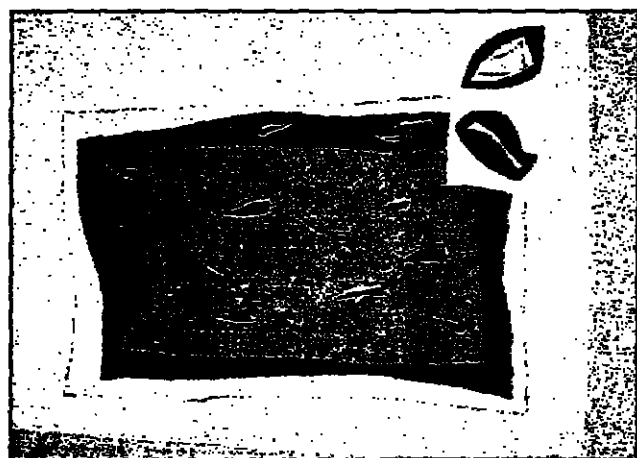
"I decided that there was a need for a more affordable range of rugs," says Helen, the bulk of whose work is one-off commissions for architects and designers. Notable for their sophisticated colour palettes, her Matt Collection rugs are widely varied in appearance, but they all show an intuitive understanding of form and shape. They would look just as good hanging on a wall. "Designing rugs is really about how things are placed in a rectangle. I do not want things to be expected." She is a graduate of the Royal College of Art, and has been influenced by Henri Matisse, Robert Motherwell, Roger Hilton and Isamu Noguchi.

British-born Christine Van Der Hurd, based in New York, is well known in America for her exuberant and often vividly coloured designs. She exhibited a collection of her rugs for the first time in Europe at 100% Design last year. Enormously diverse in style, many of her designs show the influence of her original career as a textile designer working in fashion and home furnishings for firms such as Mary Quant, Biba, Liberty and Osborne & Little. Amongst the most elegant of her rugs is "Tra la la", which depicts a curly, snaking line framed by a wiggly border. "Day" is a black line on a cream ground. "Night" is the reverse, a cream line on a black ground. Other designs include a witty amalgam of

Artworks underfoot



One of the most influential forces behind the renaissance of 'rug art' is designer Christopher Farr. He has realised that there is a demand for a more modern product made with traditional methods. He has attracted an impressive list of designers who are keen to work with him



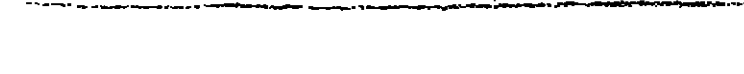
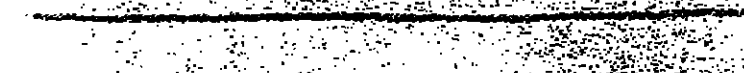
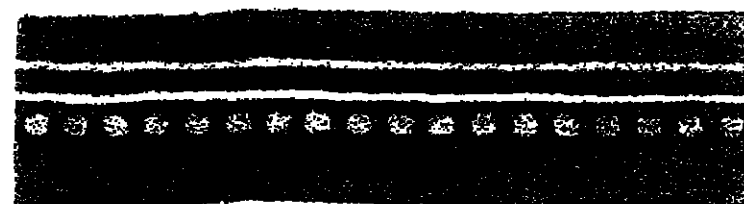
influences from two contrasting sources, the architect and designer Gio Ponti, and the fashion designer Emilio Pucci, entitled, unsurprisingly, "Ponti-Pucci". Apart from hand-tufting, Christine Van Der Hurd uses a variety of means of manufacture, including hand-knotting, needlepoint and over-tufted machine-made broadloom.

Another sign of the growing interest in rugs is that the Edinburgh Tapestry Company, which has an international reputation for its superb tapestries, has added rugs to its range. A group of leading contemporary artists and designers – including Elizabeth Blackadder, John Bellamy, Sally Greaves-Lord, Leonard McComb and Kaffe Fassett – have created a studio collection of rugs. Prices range from £1,500 to £2,300. Rugs can also be designed to clients' specifications. The rugs are made using a hand-tufting gun that "shoots" the yarn through a strong cloth with the design already drawn on to it, stretched over a wooden frame. The rug is then latexed and covered with a hessian backing. Finally, a smooth finish is achieved with a shearing machine, likened by the artists to a lawnmower.

JAB, a German firm well known in this country for its furnishing fabrics, has been making modern designer rugs since 1974, but has only recently decided to sell them in the British Isles. The Design Edition is a mixture of hand-tufted and woven rugs, some intriguingly inlaid with strips of leather, or copper and silver discs.

If you are after something more traditional, Liberty's rug department always has more than 3,000 rugs in stock, at prices from £25,000 to £60,000. The department is awash with rugs, in piles, hanging from the wall and scattered across the floor. "I want it to look a bit wrecked, like a true Oriental bazaar's. People mustn't be put off," says Ron Stewart, the buyer. "We turn over all the stock at least once a year." Mr Stewart makes frequent buying trips to Pakistan, India, Iran and Russia. "Iran and Afghanistan are our two main areas, because they offer the biggest variety and are the most interesting in terms of old and new traditional designs," he says. "People tend to associate us with traditional designs but I believe we should be more innovative, and we hope to be introducing a new range of carpets based on Japanese textile prints later this year. We sell to a huge range of customers from students to OAPs. We can arrange for one-off commissions which can take anything between four months to a year to execute. When trying to advise customers we begin by asking a few standard preliminary questions to try to narrow down their requirements. For instance: is it going to take a real pounding? What shape is the room? And so on. My advice is always: "Buy what you like; never skimp; and buy a bigger one, because it seems cheaper."

Christopher Farr, 115 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 (0171-916 7690); also at 212 Westbourne Grove, London W11.
The Matt Collection by Helen Yardley, A-Z Studios, 3-5 Hardwicke Street, London SE1 (0171-403 7114).
Christine Van Der Hurd (0171-584 3064).
The Edinburgh Tapestry Company, Dovecot Studios, 2 Dovecot Road, Edinburgh (0131-334 4118).
Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 1234).
Design Edition by JAB is available from John Charles Interiors, Birmingham (0121-420 3977); Castle Curtains, Farnham, Co Dublin (00353 1 295 5100) and James Archibald, Aberdeen (01222 596181).



Wheat joins the gravy train

Sheila Prophet ruminates on the latest substitutes for meat

Meat is off the menu in millions of British households because children are simply refusing to eat it. A survey released last week by the Vegetarian Society revealed that one in five families now has a child aged between four and 11 who is, in the industry jargon, a meat avoider, refusing to eat three or more kinds of meat. Beef is the least acceptable of all, with 38 per cent of children refusing to eat it.

It is statistics like these that have persuaded food companies to spend millions of pounds developing substitutes, or meat analogues as they are called in the trade.

The market in meat-free meals is worth £100m a year and is growing steadily. Household names such as Birds Eye are treating it very seriously, after their research showed more than 50 per cent of us now have two to three meat-free meals per week. The company has produced a range of mainstream meals aimed squarely at families with meat free sausages proving the best-seller, and grills and burgers also doing well. Ross Foods has had similar success with the Linda McCartney range of meals such as shepherd's pie and lasagnas.

It has taken years of research to produce substitutes that look, taste, and perhaps most important, feel just like the real thing. But despite the growing choice of foods on offer, the companies all use the same basic material, vegetable protein, which is currently produced from four plants – soya, peas, wheat and a fungus closely related to the mushroom.

The soya products are the longest established, having been used in the east for thousands of years, and widely available in the west for the last 30. Tofu is produced by soaking, crushing and heating soya beans, the seeds of the soya plant, to produce soya milk, which is then coagulated and pressed into a curd. Cauldron Foods, the largest producer of tofu in Britain says sales have risen by 25 per cent year on year and says the BSE scare has given it a big boost.

Textured vegetable protein (TVP) is made by grinding soya beans into flour, which is processed and dried to produce a sponge-like substance which can be given a meaty flavour.

Arrum is a mixture of pea and wheat protein, which has made a successful entry by being chosen both by Birds Eye and Ross Foods as an ingredient in their ready meals. Lucas Ingredients, the company which has produced and patented it, says the key to its success is its chewability.

"We looked into exactly what happens to the human mouth when it chews food, and we found in Arrum a product that is very close to meat, with six chews to a bite," explains Lucas Ingredients' David Rowland. "The brain receives similar feedback when eating Arrum to that when eating meat." That gives Arrum an edge over competitors, which can take up to 12 chews per bite, he says.

Arrum cannot yet be bought on its own, but that is to change over the next year. Quorn is already a household name. It is produced from a tiny fungus called

Fusarium Granineurum, discovered in fields around Marlow, Buckinghamshire, in the 1960s by scientists seeking a new protein source. The fungus is fermented in huge tanks in a mixture of oxygen, glucose, nitrogen and minerals to produce myco-protein, a pale yellow dough-like substance which is then flavoured, textured and mixed with egg-white, without which it would fall apart when cooked.

The public certainly likes it, but not everyone is completely happy with Quorn. The Vegetarian Society says that, reluctantly, it is unable to approve it because the eggs are not free-range. Marlow Foods says that is because it cannot find a large enough supply of free-range eggs and it hopes to resolve the problem.

Anyway, vegetarians are not the companies' primary targets. They are already converted. The companies have bigger markets in mind.

Vegetable proteins are the perfect products for the Nineties. Not only are they "guilt-free", they are also high in protein and low in fat, calories and cholesterol. And they do not have associations with horrors like mad cow disease or E Coli.

The food companies are confident this market will grow in years ahead and research is continuing into new sources of meat-free food. If you thought Quorn sounded like science fiction, wait till you see what they are cooking up now. The latest research is examining the nutritional benefits of lupins.

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Don't forget your passport, ticket, guide book ... or your luggage. As travel editor Simon Calder discovers, the students of Central St Martins have proved you can travel light – and with style

The sign at Heathrow was uncompromising: "Only one piece of hand luggage per passenger." I had five. I got through, though not until a curious security guard had examined each item as though he hadn't seen anything like it. Which he hadn't – because a set of unique designs was getting a first road test. Fortunately, the handful of hand baggage had been specially designed by students at the Central St Martins School of Art to be discreet.

They had been created at the behest of STA Travel, which challenged some of Britain's brightest young designers to produce the "ultimate travel accessory". Janet Lance-Hughes, fashion tutor at Central St Martins, selected the five finalists that appear here. And my mission was to take them on a test run to Amsterdam.

Over a long weekend, I tested them out among the dodgy dives of Amsterdam (and Heathrow) via planes, trains and bikes, finishing up at the tea room of the fancy Kurhaus Hotel on the seafront at Schveningen. To try to make the selection process scientific, each design was evaluated on several criteria, as follows:

Style – who would this most suit? Comfort – for how long would you be prepared to walk through the jungle with the item? Security – starting at Kennedy airport in New York, how quickly would your possessions disappear? And an advertising slogan was devised for each. My fellow judges were Dick Porter, chief executive of STA Travel Worldwide, and the international product designer Ross Lovegrove. All the products deserve commercial success, but we agreed unanimously that Rachel Atkinson's body band was the clear winner. Her prize is a weekend in New York.

These are the accessories:

Pocket Pack
You can locate it anywhere you like, and apply it with the sewing kit supplied. But the designer, Becky Dudley, had kindly provided a T-shirt with the pocket already discreetly tacked to the lower part of the back.

Style – best person to use it? Sarah Ferguson, who could keep her jewellery safe rather than checking it in.

Comfort – how long in the jungle? In the swamp of Amsterdam's red light zone, an hour was quite enough.

Security – how easily nicked? Only by a dancing partner.

Slogan – "You can't pick a better pocket."

Travel Trousers

These appear to be an ordinary pair of Chinos. The trick to Gisèle Mardac's design is a deep but hard-to-reach pocket inside the thigh. But the operation necessary to reach for your Guilders in order to pay the daintily dressed tea room waitress is impossible to do without everyone tutting at your intense self-exploration.

Style – best person to use them? Michael Palin
Comfort – how long in the jungle? All week (and the trousers help keep leeches away, too).

Security – how easily nicked in New York? Only in a situation of considerable intimacy.
Slogan – "Is that a hidden pocket in your trousers or ...?"

Front-loading Apron Bag

You could spend all weekend using Amy Walton's intriguing construction simply as a shoulder bag. Made ruggedly of low-visibility canvas, it has a pocket for almost anything. Travelling photographers will find its neat selection of pockets useful – especially when

passport, ticket, money, map, guide book and compact camera – while retaining its comfortable curves in black leather. Ideal, then, for attending the embassy event in Oslo; this stylish accessory marks you out as a sophisticate. The streets in the Norwegian capital are not lined with prospective bag-snatchers. In most other parts of the world, though, a baddie would have your bag marked out as an easy target.

Style – best person to use it? His Excellency Mark Elliott, HM Ambassador to Norway.

Comfort – how long in the jungle? Only in the dry season; the monsoon would ruin the leather in seconds.

Security – how easily nicked in New York? Don't blink.

Slogan – "This one's just a decoy, honest."

Body Band

When I hear the word fashion, I reach for my anorak. But the potential for Rachel Atkinson's supremely simple design to become the fashion accessory for the summer is clear even to a dismal dresser like me. For years, some hardy travellers have used folds of elastic bandage to carry valuables. The difference with Ms Atkinson's armband is that it is custom-built to give easy access for you to reach your valuables, while keeping them safe from wayward hands.

Wear this fold of Lycra on the upper arm for ostentation or the lower leg for discretion.

Style – best person to use it? anyone from Swampy to Naomi Campbell.

Comfort – how long in the jungle? All year. The Band is durable, lightweight and bright, handy for scaring off snakes.

Security – how easily nicked in New York? The biggest risk is that you could become a fashion victim, robbed for the armband itself rather than what it contains.

Slogan – two choices: "Forget hand luggage – take arm luggage." Or "Out of arm's way."

Competition: Arm yourself for travel

Rachel Atkinson's design is already hot property – but you can be one of the first to own it. The Independent, STA Travel and Central St Martins have commissioned 10 arm-bands for the winners of our arm-twisting competition.

To enter, all you need to do is to come up with an intriguing or entertaining addition to the bare minimum required for foreign travel – passport, ticket, money. Tell us in 50 words or less what you take, and why.

The writers of the 10 best entries will receive an arm-band. Send your entry to Essentials, Travel Desk, The Independent, One Canada Square, London E14 4DL; or fax it to 0171-293 2451; or e-mail it to travel@independent.co.uk. The closing date is Friday, 4 April.

Sling Bag

Going to a cocktail party in Norway? This one's for you. Chris Steele has come up with a sleek, understated design that will cheerfully contain

unfolded into "apron" mode. You hook a handle over each shoulder, and the bag opens out in front of you.

Style – best person to use it? Keith Floyd

Comfort – how long in the jungle? All day, though those leeches could lurk in pockets.

Security – how easily nicked in New York? The apron could stay on for ever, but individual items are at risk unless stored in the secret pocket.

Slogan – "From Turkey to Table Mountain, the perfect travelling companion for a Cook's Tour."

Try the travel trousers...

... or the nifty pocket pack

... or even the sling bag

... or the nifty pocket pack

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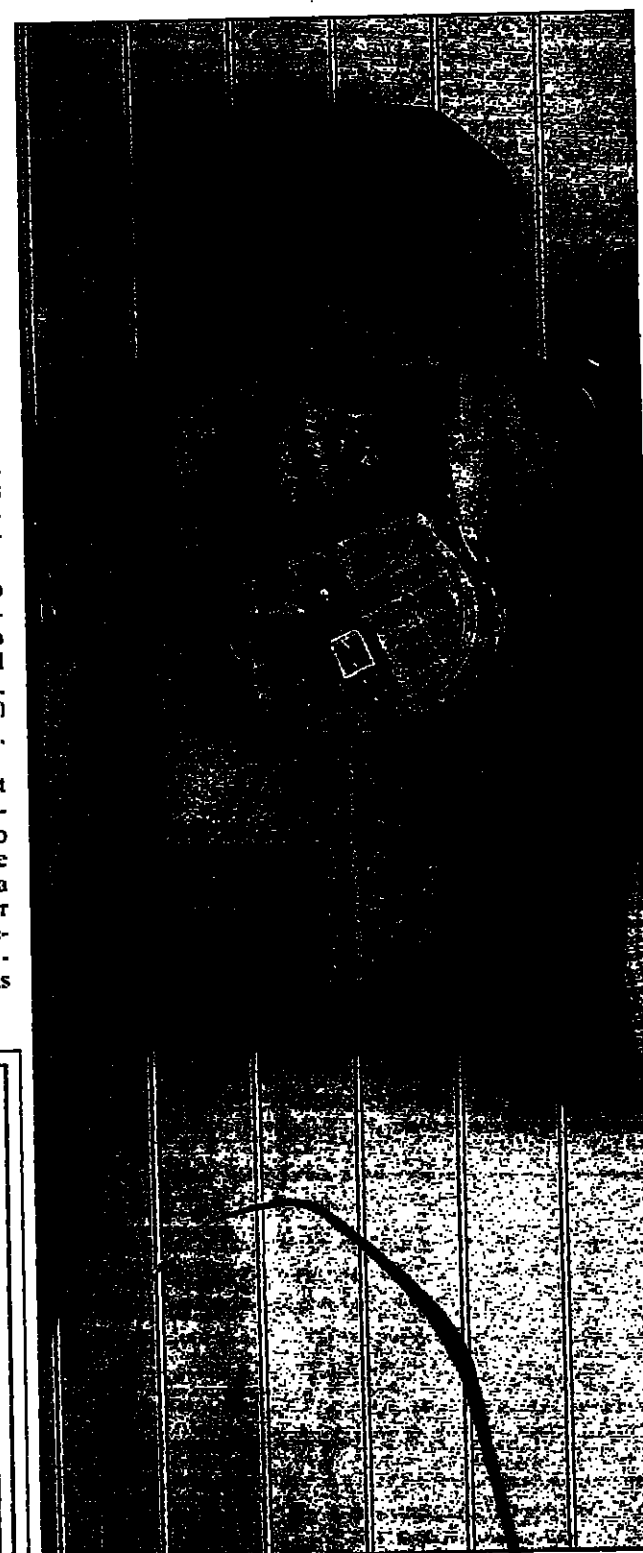
... or even the sling bag

... or the nifty pocket pack



Luggage at large: Young doc, Donald Sinden, with the kind of overload loved of Fifties' travellers and movieland wanderers

Dyed in the wool elegance



Bank on the Tweed: Glenalmond luggage combines the traditional with modern design and up-to-the minute colours. Japanese designer Michiko Koshino has created a small collection

Three Japanese men in dark suits standing in the middle of a field of cows is not a usual sight in the hilly farmland of Perthshire.

However, a local farmer was quick to recognise them as travellers in search of The Glenalmond Tweed Company whose shop at Culnacloch farm about 10 miles north of Crieff is well known in the region for attracting far-flung customers.

Andrew and Sally St John started The Glenalmond Tweed Company in 1992. They sell beautifully made bags in brightly coloured and checked Harris tweed with bridle leather straps and bindings, and solid brass fittings. The large selection includes a rucksack, two sizes of holdall and four of tote bag.

The tweed is bonded with a rubberised solution on to cotton canvas to make it waterproof, though one of the qualities of Harris tweed is that it repels water, because of its density and the natural oils in the wool. There is also a clothes range – mainly waistcoats, jackets and coats.

The designs and colours of the materials alone are reason enough to want to swathe yourself in Glenalmond products, but the styling is also good. A long waistcoat with a Nehru collar and a reversible tweed and leather jerkin were my favourites. A finishing touch is the snag-horn buttons used on all the clothes.

Though the journey to the shop makes for a wonderful expedition through stunning countryside, Glenalmond does a mail-order catalogue for those who cannot make it to north Perthshire. It also has outlets at Liberty, Brora and The Scotch House. This year it introduces a small collection designed by the Japanese designer Michiko Koshino.

Combining such a traditional fabric as Harris tweed and the designs of a wacky Japanese designer (she produced the first own-label condoms and designs the wild, leather Motor King range) may not at first seem obvious but the St Johns wanted to show

You can carry it all off smartly with a touch of mail order tweed, writes Fiona MacAulay



how well the beauty of Harris tweed complements modern design shapes. After all, British designers, in particular Vivienne Westwood and Paul Smith, have already shown how successfully tweed and tartan can be married with contemporary design ideas.

Michiko's range comes in the more subtle shades of Harris tweed – black, cream, greys and browns – and her designs are simple and well-cut. They include a reefer jacket and a quilted duffel coat for men and a double breasted mid-length coat for women. She has designed her own oval-shaped buttons, embossed with a sheep's head taken from the Glenalmond logo. Her bags are made in checked Harris tweed from the new furnishing type fabric that the St Johns are introducing to their range. It looks less woolly than the original fabric and so will be particularly good for spring and summer. "Our bag-maker was rather taken aback when he received a prototype from Michiko in bright yellow plastic to be made up in tweed. He

just wasn't used to modern materials!"

The St Johns have been visiting Harris for 14 years and are obviously in love with the place. They look forward enormously to their twice-yearly buying trips. They first went there after being shipwrecked on a trip to St Kilda and began a long relationship with a group of the island's weavers.

They are incredibly supportive about our business but all they are really interested in is the well-being of our flock of sheep; that's the real bond between us!"

Although the wool is now spun, dyed and finished by machine it is still woven by weavers in their own homes and so its production is literally a cottage industry. It is immediately recognisable by its weight and thick texture and for its amazing blending of colours which reflect the Hebridean landscape.

In the Glenalmond shop the St Johns also stock a selection of tweed to be sold by the metre. These include cloth made by Joan MacLennan, one of the few weavers who still uses the old wooden loom instead of the more modern Hattersley loom. She is one of the small group of weavers who use vegetable dyes made from indigenous plants. Elderberries for purple, indigo for blue, ragwort flowers and heather tips for yellow – the natural palette is extensive, as one can see from a close look her fabrics. The tradition of Harris tweed-making is steeped in ritual and folklore. The final part of the process used to be the blessing of the tweed: "Mayest thou enjoy it, Mayest thou wear it, Mayest thou finish it, Until thou find it in shreds, in strips, in rags, in tatters!" The Glenalmond Tweed Company brings us this wonderful fabric in its many designs of handbags, luggage and clothes so that we can do just what the blessing bids.

The Glenalmond Tweed Company, Culnacloch, Glenalmond, Perth PH17 3SN. Telephone 01738 880322 for a catalogue or local stockist.

Bank on the Tweed: Glenalmond luggage combines the traditional with modern design and up-to-the minute colours. Japanese designer Michiko Koshino has created a small collection

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مكتبة من الأصل

Road Test: Mazda 323 By John Simister

Half-close your eyes, and you could be looking at an Audi A3. Similar size, similar squared-off tail with big, upright rear lights, similar lack of visual clutter: already, Mazda's new 323 hatchback is having an unexpectedly positive effect on your expectations.

The effect is unexpected because Mazda's mainstream cars have not hitherto been noted for their ability to excite. Not that recent 323s have been wilfully bland, far from it: the five-door version is futuristic-looking device, and the just-released three-door was certainly distinctive, with its undersized wheels and curious double-decker rear window. But distinction did not lead to desire, and few found buyers. So it had to go.

In its place comes the car you see here, effectively the front half of the least interesting 323 (the four-door saloon, recently chopped from the range but now reinstated) with a new aft end. There's a choice of two 16-valve engines, a 1.3-litre or a more powerful 1.5 with twin camshafts, and two trim levels, LXI and GXI. The 1.5 signifies fuel injection, as ever, but as every car has injection nowadays, it does seem superfluous. That's marketing for you.

Talking of which, you will probably have noticed Mazda's poster campaign for these latest 323s. The ads use strange typefaces and equally strange assertions, likening a Volkswagen Golf to a square box but the no more curvaceous 323 to a pebble. The effect is other-

Almost, but not quite

worldly and rather daft, as though the result of a long night on the magic mushrooms. Still, the optional three-spoke alloy wheels look quite daring.

Unfortunately, the visual promise of the outside evaporates as soon as you sit in the Mazda. There is nothing interesting about the cabin at all, and no design-based clues as to the make of car you're about to drive. Grey plastics abound, the dials are utilitarian, and there's a pointless panel high up in the middle of the dashboard containing just a clock and the heated rear window switch. Yet the radio is banished to a slot much lower down, where its fiddly

controls are hard to see, never mind use. Panel and radio should be transposed forthwith.

If your first drive is in stop-start traffic, you'll straight away encounter a trait increasingly common in Japanese cars: snatchy progress caused by over-flexible engine mountings and an anaesthetised clutch. You can't feel the drive being taken up as you raise the pedal; all you have to go on is the fact that the engine speed is dropping and the car is starting to move.

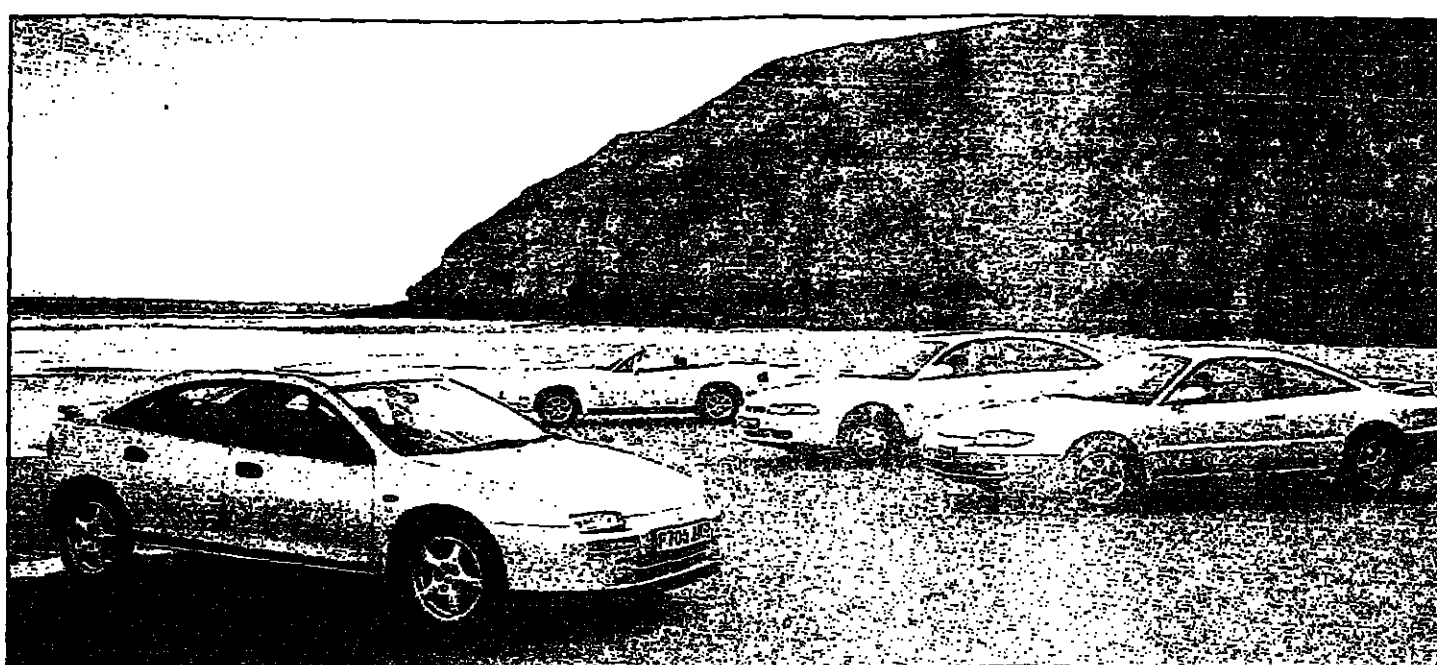
With the 1.5-litre, 90bhp engine, the 323 pulls reasonably vigorously through the gears and cruises easily, if noisily. There's a lot of road roar and body resonance at motorway

speeds. Should you so desire, you can enjoy the Mazda's strong road-holding and easy, agile handling: it steers crisply (although the power-assisted system gives little in the way of feedback to the driver) and keeps the movements of its body under tight control so your passengers won't be thrown about. Surprisingly, it also rides smoothly over bumps even on the low-profile tyres that come with the alloy wheels.

Cabin space is adequate, so is boot space, and there's adequate equipment in the £12,360 model, including electric front windows, a sunroof and the obligatory pair of airbags. The car is also adequately well made, has a three-year

warranty, and it probably won't go wrong. What it is not, however, is the glamorous, personality-extending, lifestyle-enhancing fashion accessory the ads would like you to believe. Its demeanour and interior decor are far too meek and colourless for that.

There's a school of thought that says all cars are pretty much the same nowadays, and it's only the branding and the image arising therefrom that differentiates them. I'm pleased to say that while we may be heading in that direction, we're not there yet. This Mazda, entirely adequate but eminently forgettable, is proof that you can't build a set of "brand values" on thin air.



All dressed up: Mazda's competent new 323 hatch does not live up to its fanciful advertising image. The interior only disappoints

MAZDA 323 HATCHBACK

Specifications

Price: £12,360 on the road. Engine: 1,489cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, 90bhp at 5,500rpm; five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed: 109mph, 0-60 in 11.6sec. Fuel consumption: 33-38mpg

Rivals

Ford Escort 1.6 LX three-door, £12,430 on the road: Ford owns most of the Mazda company, but its own Escort is better designed, and better to drive.
Honda Civic 1.5 LS three-door, £13,585 on the road: Best Japanese rival. Has more spirit than the

Mazda and a much more welcoming cabin.

Fiat Bravo 1.6 SX, £12,065: Current European Car of the Year, progressive styling, fun to drive, lumpy ride, good value.
Peugeot 306 1.6 XS, £12,835 on the road: Best ride and handling blend in the size class, good-looking and good value. Facelift imminent.

Volkswagen Golf 1.6 CL five-door, £12,425 on the road: No sporty three doors at this price, but CL has usual Golf substance and classless appeal.

A class apart: the cream of the used-car lot

The days are longer, the weather warmer and, above all, the showrooms and forecourts of the nation are getting busier. It's that time of the year when the motor trade gets excited as used-car buyers emerge from winter hibernation. Trouble is, the used-car market has never been bigger, busier or more confusing. So here is our guide to the most affordable and sensible cars in their class – used cars that will hold their value, be utterly reliable and yet still be interesting to own and exhilarating to drive...

Small Hatchback
Fiat Punto. Once upon a time a Fiat only made sense as a used buy because it was cheap. Unfortunately they were also unreliable. Not so the Punto which, on its 1994 launch, was acclaimed as a thoroughly modern small hatchback. Three years on these early cars are still solid and fault-free, fun to drive and, in SX form, well equipped. Prices start at just over £3,000 for a high mileage 55 S, but £5,000 buys a 1994 75 SX, or a 55 S 5-door. Runners up: Renault Clio, Nissan Micra.

Mid-Size Hatchback
Renault 19. The 19 looks uninspiring and performance is average, but that is not the point. In the highly competitive hatchback market, owners want a reliable slogger, and the 19 is it. The car's lack of charisma has denied values – making them great bargains, especially as the revised Phase 11 models were well equipped and better built. Prices for the later Phase 11 models is £3,000, £4,000 for a 1993 RL and £6,000 for a '94 RCL. Runners up: Citroen ZX, Volkswagen Golf.

Family Saloon/Hatch
Ford Mondeo. You might hate reps as they hog the motorway centre lane, but if it wasn't for them you would not have great cars like the Mondeo. It is refined, the engines are strong and the interior very comfortable. The bottom line is cheap prices because of oversupply to company fleets. Add to that the fact there is a Ford dealer on every corner and buyers can't go wrong. Prices start at £4,000 for the 1.6, £5,000 for a '94 1.8 LX, or £6,000 for a 2.0i GLX. Runners up: Nissan Primera, Citroen Xantia.

Large Car
Vauxhall Omega. This is BMW and Mercedes high-car comfort and build quality at Vauxhall prices. Big cars don't come much roomier than this: the boot is huge and the seats very comfortable. For those that can afford it, the V6 versions have a useful amount of performance. Because this is a company fleet favourite there are lots around and the prices are reasonable: £7,000 is the starting point for a '94 2.0i GLS, £8,000 for the CD version 2.5 V6 at £9,000. Runners up: Ford Granada, Rover 800.

Volvo 850. Could there be any other estate but a Volvo? Well yes, every manufacturer has caught up, but Volvo has always understood that you need a low, flat cargo deck and huge load capacity. The 850 is all that plus personality – a Volvo first. This is no tank, but a charismatic and quick estate which is not cheap to buy, used, but you can be confident it will last forever. Although costly, the quality of the cars will be very high. Prices start at £10,000 for a 1993 example, £12,000 for a GLT from '94. Runners up: Vauxhall Carlton, Citroen BX.



Small Prestige
BMW 318. The 3 series has been the executive benchmark for the past decade. The 318 is fun to drive, has a comfortable interior, but cramped rear seating, and has contained running costs. Early examples suffered build quality problems, which have since been ironed out. It is now possible to haggle for the yuppies' old favourite: £7,000 buys a 1991 example with a high mileage. An SE from 1993 will be £10,000 and a '95 automatic £15,000. Runners up: Mercedes 190, Audi 80.



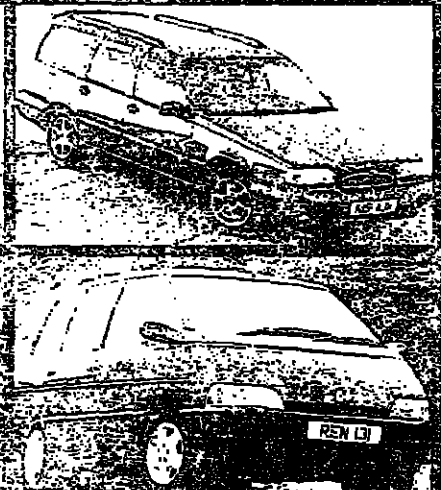
Large Prestige
Mercedes 300 Series. There are cheaper, better equipped and faster luxury cars, but none have the three-pointed star on the bonnet. What is now the E class was once the 300/500 Series – arguably the best saloon they ever built. The body styling is ageless, which it has to be because a 300 can last well into the next millennium. The arrival of the new model has helped to depreciate prices to affordable levels: 300Es start at just under £8,000 for an '87 model to £17,000 for a '92. Runners up: BMW 7 Series, Jaguar XJ40.



Sports Car
Mazda MX5. This is the car that triggered the roadster revival and it's still going strong. Like British sports cars of old, it is full of character and fun... but it won't break down. Demand always outstrips supply, so prices are very firm, making it almost a blue-chip investment: the beauty is that once you have had your fun it will be easy to re-sell. Prices don't go lower than £8,000 for a seven-year-old example, up to about £12,000 for a '94 model. Runners up: Volkswagen Corrado, Porsche 944.



Four-Wheel-Drive
Chrysler Cherokee. This is the four-wheel drive which has taken the UK by storm, and it is easy to see why. The Cherokee is small in off-road terms and with a 4.0 litre engine, is no slouch on the tarmac. High levels of equipment and car-like performance have endeared it to thousands. Build quality and reliability so far have proved to be excellent. Used prices are therefore high. The 2.5 litre-engined Cherokee starts at £10,000, 4.0 litre at £12,000. Diesel £14,000. Runners up: Mitsubishi Shogun, Isuzu Trooper.



People Carrier
Renault Espace. The original people carrier is still the best. A very stylish package which does not drive or look like a van. With all the seats occupied, luggage space is limited and Renault build quality always slightly suspect, but overall a reliable and desirable vehicle. The revised model from 1991 is the best. Because everyone wants an Espace there are some bargains among the RXN models. Arrival of the new Espace will make the old one a touch cheaper, starting at £8,000 for an RN. Runners up: Mitsubishi Spacewagon, Toyota Previa.

Motor racing improves road-cars, or so the car companies will tell you. Sure. And cigarette smoking makes you hunkier, wear Calvin Kleins and you'll look like Kate Moss, and Michael Schumacher wears an Omega so they must be great watches. In fact, car companies go motor racing for the same reason that they hire Nicole, Nigel Havers and swanky advertising agencies: to fog cars. As proof, those car makers who produce formula one racing engines (Renault, Peugeot, Mercedes,

Ford) generally make the least refined road-car engines. Yamaha, on the other hand, can't seem to make an F1 engine capable of powering Damon Hill around a single lap. Yet its motorbike engines are fabulous. Go figure it.

Yet, unusually, the recent Australian GP in Melbourne did come up with a solution to arguably the greatest of all problems facing the motor car. It was nothing to do with carbon fibre brakes or advanced aerodynamics; on fact, it had nothing to do with the action

No car park at a grand prix? Melbourne did without it. By Gavin Green

on the track at all. It was the way they solved the thorny problem of traffic congestion. Normally, at a GP meeting, you take more time trying to get into and out of a circuit than you do watching the action. It's like a microcosm of peak-hour traffic in any big British city, but worse.

The Melbourne organisers decided not to have any car parking at all near the circuit. The roads around the Albert Park track, only a mile or so from the city centre, were blissfully uncongested. Instead, if you wanted to go to the races – and 290,000 people did, over the three-day meeting – you had to go by train, tram (Melbourne has a good streetcar network), bus, taxi or chauffeur-driven limo.

Visitors got into and out of the circuit quickly and easily. The various forms of public transport were organised to complement each other. Trains ferried people from around the city (and the country) to meeting-points nearer the circuit, from where trams and buses whisked them to the track. Melbourne pioneered such a system for its GP last year, and it worked a treat. This year, unfortunately, it wasn't quite so good. In a

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Penny Jackson gives good advice on buying in northern France

Paul Woodhouse bought his two-up, two-down terrace house in Etaples, a small fishing town outside Le

Tony and Junko Fowle, who have a house in a small town on the Cherbourg Peninsula, describe it as stepping back 40 years. "It is so peaceful, the world seems to stop. There isn't the hassle there. The quality of life, whether the food or the way people live, makes it difficult to leave." It was not an auspicious start though. They bought in St.

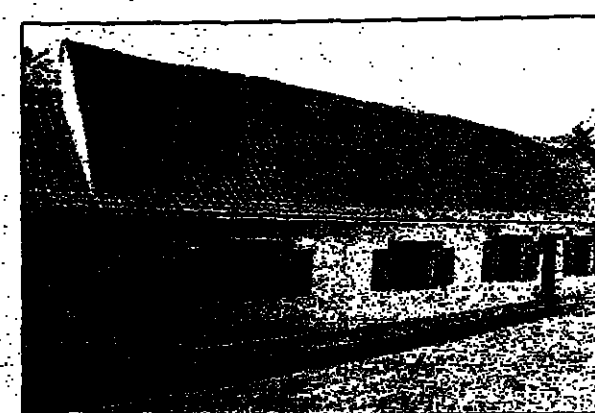
Some owners choose to bring over teams of British workmen to restore houses, which can, says Penny Zoldan, cause some resentment. "Don't leave your common sense behind, but tradesmen are less likely to take you for a ride if you go very locally." Trouble is, they prob-

Houses shown (right, top to bottom)

A country house overlooking the Canche Valley in a wooded garden. It has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, cellar, attic and garages. Price (F Fr) 720000 (£80,000).



PHOTO: DMEAC



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Buyers who rush to ruins

Rosalind Russell on the irresistible appeal of a derelict property



Interest in Stone Farm, Kent (above), has been intense – despite the house being virtually uninhabitable. Below: Clifton House, Timberland, Lincoln

As house prices spiral, supply dries up and demand increases, why not consider somewhere pleasing, picturesque ... and falling to pieces.

You may find the price appealing, but beware the words "scope for improvement". They should sound loud warning bells in the ears of buyers with limited funds.

A Grade II listed six-bedroom Georgian house for £42,500? Sounds too good to be true. Well, it is true. But when the estate agent says it's in a time warp, he's not joking. Clifton House has barely been touched in 200 years, apart from having electric wiring installed around 1900.

Standing in large gardens near Lincoln, it has classical proportions, four reception rooms, the original roof tiles and cast-iron guttering – and dry rot, wet rot, mould and subsidence. The kitchen is currently partitioned to include a bathroom, from which a ladder leads to a first-floor room. There is no heating, and the windows are falling out because the putty is Georgian, too. The brick floors are worn into gullies, showing where generations have walked from room to room.

Clifton is also the subject of a local authority closing order, which means a buyer must comply with a schedule of works prepared by the council and in line with listed building regulations.

"It will need the whole front taking down and rebuilt," says Christopher Dew, who is buying it. "It has rotated, turning slightly forward, and will need underpinning. Rainwater has been running into the footings for a long

time, so taking down the front elevation is the only cure. All the bricks will have to be kept and numbered. The internal plasterwork has been infected with mould and dry rot."

Dew is not a dreamer. He is a build-

er and the sea and commutable to London. We love it here, and it will be hideous to leave."

Planning consent has finally been granted for rebuilding the house, but Kim is now taking up an offer to work in Chile. "I just can't afford to do both," he says. "As reconstructing Oxney Court is likely to cost around £500,000. But I wouldn't be frightened to take on a project like this again."

Cluttons are looking for a buyer with 250 guineas (£262,500).

Less daunting is a Victorian Grade II listed house in the middle of Saffron Walden, recently offered for sale by the East Anglian agents Bruce Munro, who were almost knocked over in the rush to view. The redbrick cottage hasn't been touched for about 30 years. It has gaps in the roof tiles, is damp, needs rewiring and could do with a modern kitchen and bathroom. The old fireplaces have been boarded up and it stands on a busy road, with nowhere to park a car.

However, the £75,000 asking price drew 17 couples in the space of two weeks before it was snapped up. "We're still getting calls about it now," says the agent.

And agent Christopher Blount says that Garden Cottage, a three-bedroom Cotswold stone property three miles from Malmesbury, sold after a week, at well above the asking price of £120,000.

"It created more interest than anything else we've sold recently," he says. "It went to 'best and final offers' with a dozen offers. The buyer plans to extend it and will need £150,000.

There is a strong demand for cottages to restore – it's everybody's dream."

Blount will be offering 17th-century Trinity Farm at auction on April 22. Originally two cottages in Redbourne, a pretty, unspoilt village, it has four bedrooms, two reception rooms, a Rayburn in the kitchen and six acres. It needs renovation.

"We had an offer in excess of the guide price on day one. We are asking for offers over £200,000. But at the end of the day we're talking about £300,000, and it will be a cash buyer."

Stone Farm, a Grade II listed 16th-century timber-framed country house in Wareham, Kent, had been on the market through Strutt and Parker for a week when someone made an offer above the £185,000 asking price. Interest in the property is so intense that the agents are organising block viewings. Yet it is virtually uninhabitable, with hot water or bathroom: the ceilings are falling down and the kitchen has a cast-iron solid fuel range and a hand water-pump. The house is primitive, to say the least.

"We did feel it would be like bees round a honeypot," admits S&P's James Thompson. "When you go in there and see all the old beams and inglenook fireplace, you can just imagine how it will look when it is refurbished. And he adds: "It is hard to explain. But it seems the worse condition the house is in, the more people want to buy it."

Contacts: Christopher Blount (01666 825725); Strutt & Parker (01227 451123); Cluttons (01622 756000).



Three of the best Houses for the money



Old Bank House in Lavenham, Suffolk, was at one time the village bank, but its first use, in the 14th century when it was built, was as a dye hall. Some of the undersides of the bricks in the rear kitchen show signs of blue dye, which is thought to have been used for uniforms worn in the Napoleonic Wars. The front of the house was added 250 years ago, when the property was used as a saddlery. Now a four-bedroom house, it has a heavily timbered kitchen/breakfast room. In the main bedroom, a walk-in cupboard is concealed behind oak panelling. Since the telegraph poles were removed from the town in 1967 and the lines hidden underground, houses in the area have become popular. £225,000, through Bedfords (01284 769999).



Old Mint Cottage in Liss Forest, Hampshire, was once the home of the Money family, but in fact it takes its name from the mint that still grows in the land behind the house. It used to be harvested as a commercial crop. Dating from 1649, the three-bedroom cottage has an inglenook in the sitting-room with inset oak seats, and a 30ft. beamed dining room. It is set in 10 acres of private grounds, which include a stream and a pond: deer, foxes, kingfishers and ducks are frequent visitors. The cottage is a mile-and-a-half from the mainline station (Waterloo 65 minutes), and is for sale through Keats for £259,500 (01428 724343).



Number One Prescott Street, just around the corner from the Royal Mint in London's Square Mile, is a refurbishment of a listed building, designed in 1932 as the Co-op's head offices. It has an impressive Expressionist-style entrance. Now redeveloped by Rialto Homes, the building has 150 apartments, the first batch of which have just been launched. Prices range from £99,500 for a studio flat to £425,000 for a three-bedroom penthouse. All will have 999-year leases. The apartments will be provided with secure parking and 24-hour security. The building is to have a landscaped internal courtyard. For sale through Hamptons (0171 824 8822).

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did expect a long lead-in to the general election, but not the record hustings hurdles the Prime Minister has lined up. At the end of the first week I am already bored with politician-speak. By the end of April I will be gibbering.

The market's immediate reaction was interesting. Everyone expects share prices to fall on a Labour victory, so why did it take the announcement of the date to send a shiver around the dealing community? Perhaps it is just the underlining of the time scale to which we are working. Maybe Cherie Blair will indeed be measuring the curtains for No 10.

What are the real worries for investors? The windfall tax stands out. Most people equate this with utilities. But look at the way water and electricity companies



Brian Tora

have been gobbled up over the past year. It would be a tax on the new American owners as much as on anyone.

Then there are the bus and rail companies. I can think of one or two commuters who would welcome some punishment meted out to train operators, but the scope seems pretty limited if a

No company can easily escape Labour's windfall tax – not even the world's favourite airline

meaningful bit of buncie is to flow the way of the Exchequer.

Do not forget BT though. It is still the largest "utility". Of course, BT's focus is increasingly offshore, but this is as much a reflection of the way in which the telecoms market is becoming a global business than fears of a high-spend socialist government

targeting one of Britain's largest companies in an effort to claw back cash from any even half-way justifiable target.

Even British Airways may not be immune from the attentions of a new Scottish chancellor. The world's favourite airline could turn into Gordon Brown's favourite target. Many of the fears of investors are in the prices already, but no one is going to stick their head above the parapet until we learn the real cost, so expect a dull period for vulnerable stocks until after the first Labour budget.

Talking of the possible new incumbent of No 11, the rumours are that he will aim for a full Budget early in June. This is ambitious for somebody who has never held a Cabinet post before. Getting to grips with the Treasury

and coaxing the right information out of the Mandarins will not be easy in the first weeks of the new government. Even if the most likely scenario is a budget with measures based on the first half of the two-envelope story, I find it difficult to see how much real judgement can be exercised after so short a period in the office.

Which is why I worry that Mr Brown might go for an easy option and reduce, or even abolish, the tax credit that accompanies share dividends. This has the merit that it will hit few voters in the pocket immediately, will be virtually impossible to understand for the majority of the population, and yet could contribute £5bn plus to the Exchequer.

Why is it such an important move? Well, no tax credit, no ability to reclaim tax if you are a

pension fund, a personal equity plan or a charity. Imagine the effect this will have on cash flows for our pension fund industry, given that 85 per cent of their investments are in ordinary shares. When previous Conservative chancellors chipped away at this benefit, the market reacted severely. Abolition could see a bid downward rerating of shares. Time to mind your eye.

All this assumes that the socialists will win. The British electorate is quite perverse, often favouring the underdog. But it is a brave commentator who will predict a Tory win with the polls standing in their present state.

Perhaps even now Mr Major is preparing the two envelopes to which I referred earlier. The story relates to an outgoing head of state who handed to his suc-

cessor two envelopes, marked No 1 and No 2. The advice he gave was to open No 1 when the first crisis hit the incoming government and No 2 when the second one arose. Sure enough, after less than a year the government's popularity had fallen and the economy was in a mess. The new head of state opened No 1. It contained just two words – "blame me". He did, and the problem was solved.

The second crisis arose and the country's leader was keen to seek the advice of his predecessor. This time the envelope contained more detailed instructions. "Prepare two envelopes," it said.

Brian Tora is chairman of the investment strategy committee at Greig Middleton, stockbrokers (0171-392 4000).

Ways to protect your income

Case study:
two salaries,
no children

NAMES: Tim O'Hara, 34, and Riki Therivel, 36.

BACKGROUND: Tim is a chartered surveyor with the Valuations Office, earning £26,800. Riki is an environmental consultant and a part-time university lecturer. Her income is around £20,000 plus £5,000 from lecturing. Although married for five years, they prefer to keep their finances separate. They have no plans to have children and have a mortgage of £10,000.

Tim has £5,000 in a building society and Riki has £2,500 plus £5,000 in a Tessa, £2,500 in a PEP and £2,000 in a unit trust.

Tim is a member of the Civil Service pension scheme, while Riki belongs to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). She also has a Prudential personal pension for £150 per month. Tim is not sure if he will be working full time in the future and is considering a separate scheme.

ADVICE REQUIRED: They require advice on regular savings and retirement planning, targeting a pension (in today's terms) of £10,000 for Tim at age 55 and £7,000 for Riki at age 60. Riki is also keen on having green/ethical investments.

THE ADVISER: Bhupinder Anand is financial planning director of Caroline Banks Associates in London (0171-486 2119). He was named Independent Financial Adviser of the Year in 1995.

THE ADVICE: The most important aspect of financial planning is to protect what the couple already have. That is, protect life, health and income. In Tim's and Riki's case, given their lack of dependents and financial independence of each other, life assurance is not necessary. Their most important asset is their income for the next 20 years and beyond.

What is beyond their control is if they lose their income due to a serious illness or accident. Income can be protected either by an income replacement insurance (often called Permanent Health Insurance or PHI) and/or a critical illness insurance, which pays out a tax-free lump sum on diagnosis of a serious illness or a total permanent disability (TPD).



Looking for cover: Riki Therivel and Tim O'Hara found the makeover sobering

As an example, PHI cover of £1,000 per month would cost £21.55 for Tim (to age 55) and £36.71 for Riki (to age 60), with Royal & Sun Alliance. The company is not the cheapest, but is one of a handful with fixed premiums. The policy is also based on a definition of being unable to follow one's "own" occupation rather than "any" occupation. Critical illness cover of £100,000 for 20 years costs £40.04 a month for Tim and £41.75 for Riki. This is with Scottish Provident which, again, is not the cheapest, but it has similar conditions as above.

Now to savings and pensions. Both Tim and Riki take a balanced view to investment risk. There are broadly two ways of savings, either using a unit trust (or similar), ideally within a PEP, or using an endowment.

The PEP route is flexible but also requires discipline to ensure that premiums are not stopped or reduced for too long, or excessive withdrawals are made. A good with-profits endowment will smooth out any market fluctuations. It also makes a discipline of saving, in that an endowment

cannot be easily temporarily suspended. Tim and Riki should split their monthly savings between the two in whatever proportion they prefer. They can also allocate some of their building society deposits similarly.

Some providers I recommend are Perpetual, Schroders and Mercury for the PEP and Commercial Union, Standard Life and Scottish Widows for the endowment. Friends Provident has a good ethical fund, which is Peppable.

With regard to pension planning, Tim should not leave the Civil Service scheme as it is one of the best available. Tim is concerned that if he becomes part-time in his later career, he will receive a reduced pension. In practice, however, if he works for 30 years, 10 of them on half pay, his pension will be based on 25 years' service.

Assuming this length of part-time employment, I estimate that Tim's pension will be around £9,000 in today's terms. However, I do not see the need to fund any further for a pension, but to use other more accessible savings.

By contrast, Riki has to

mainly fund her own pension. I estimate that Riki needs to contribute around £500 per month gross. However, the maximum she can contribute is 20 per cent of her salary, about £333 per month. She therefore needs to also look at other forms of savings.

Prudential does not offer any ethical funds. A better choice would be NFI whose Global Care fund has performed well.

Riki may also take advantage of a pension planning technique known as "salary sacrifice". This works by reducing her salary by the gross amount of the pension contribution that she wishes to make, say £3,500 per annum. Her employer then pays that contribution to her personal pension instead.

THE VERDICT: Tim says: "I don't like to imagine scenarios where I'm seriously ill or injured. I'll have to think about that. This makeover has been very helpful."

Riki says: "It was sobering to see how much I'll have to start setting aside for a pension. The idea of salary sacrifice is a good one and I'll take it up with my company."

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John Windsor on the rise of classic works by black authors

What shocks passers-by most about Britain's first black second-hand bookshop are the prices. As black people grow in appreciation of their literary heritage, the value of fine-condition first editions by key 20th century black novelists, poets and politicians has risen beyond £100 and is still rising.

I sat with Robert Beckford in his shop, Souls of Black Folk, in Brixton, watching the faces of black and white shoppers who had spotted the price tags on the volumes balanced precariously against his window.

Paul Robeson's autobiography, *Here I Stand*, £65. The first American edition of James Baldwin's *No Name in the Street*, published as recently as 1972, also £65. The first UK edition of Chester Himes's first novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, written in prison in 1947, £100.

Onlookers' jaws dropped. Mr Beckford smiled. "They've never seen books like these," he said.

In the ascendant are books by black authors who made their names during the Harlem Renaissance in Manhattan in the Twenties and Thirties, such as Baldwin, the novelist Ralph Ellison, poet Langston Hughes and Richard Wright (his novel *Native Son* is worth £500-£600 with dust-jacket intact).

Also popular are books by post-war Pan-African political campaigners Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and contemporary women writers such as Terri MacMillan, Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou.

The ebullient Beckford has a string of academic qualifications, including an MA and an Oxford BSc in hotel



Black gold-dust

management. When he is not book-selling or scouring bookshops and fairs for black titles, he is lecturing in tourism and business studies.

His customers are mainly black. Hitherto, the almost exclusively white British book trade has sold its black books almost exclusively to white collectors, many of them American.

In bookshops off Tottenham Court Road, Mr Beckford says, he has seen sky-high prices for black books, such as a first edition of Booker prize winner Ben Okri's poems, *Flowers and Shadows*, at £275.

He has rocked the trade's boat by complaining in print that some white dealers are "stockpiling" black books — by which he means that some of

those with black book sections are reluctant to sell him titles requested by his customers or send him their mail-order catalogues.

Second-hand black books, says Mr Beckford, are a new bandwagon set rolling by the increase in academic black studies courses and the emergence of black publishers such as The X Press, which is reprinting black American classics following the success in 1992 of its attention-grabbing black gangster thriller *Yardie*.

In the United States, the market for African-American is booming. At Swann's second annual auction in New York last month, a fine 1891 first edition of *Magda*, the first verifiable novel by an African-American

woman, Emma Dunham Kelly, fetched \$4,400 (£2,665).

An 1867 second American edition of *Clotel, Or The Coloured Heroine*, a first novel by an African-American man, sold for \$2,000 (£1,210). It is the story of the daughter of a US senator and his black mistress.

If you prefer to read the more salacious original version of 1853, in which Clotel is the illegitimate daughter of no less than President Thomas Jefferson, buy The X Press's reprint, *The President's Daughter*.

In London, black film memorabilia attracts enthusiastic bidding. In Christie's South Kensington's next film poster sale on Monday (2pm), an 11in by 14in lobby card advertising

the first talkie, *The Jazz Singer*, of 1927, in which Al Jolson sang the legendary "Mammy", is estimated at £1,000 to £1,500 (pictured left).

All collectors of black memorabilia have encountered the accusation of racism, to which their retort is "black history". Collectors, auctioneers and dealers use the term "blackploitation" to describe collectables that reinforce black stereotypes. There are two lots of blackploitation.

One is one-sheet film posters in the South Kensington sale. One lot, containing 32 posters for American films, including *Shufly's Big Score*, *Superdude* and *The Klansman*, is estimated at £300 to £500.

A big collection of "black ephemera" — advertising and packaging featuring black characters — fetched strong prices at Bonhams Chelsea in December. One of the 24 lots — three dozen advertising leaflets including well-worn images juxtaposing soap and black skin — made £360, more than double the £100-£200 estimate. Still modestly priced in this country are what are disconcertingly flagged as "coon cards" at postcard fairs. Published before the war, these postcards are today un-PC.

There is no doubt about the racism of American cards depicting black people as apes. These cards cost £7-£8 from postcard dealers. John Pardee, managing director of a London financial services company, has collected about 1,000 of them.

He regards them as social history, a natural addition to the rest of his collection — women's rights and anti-racist rights postcards. "But," he says, "whereas you find Jews collecting even anti-semitic Judaica, I know of no black people who collect these cards. They are very sensitive about the whole thing."

Souls of Black Folk (Robert Beckford), Unit 2, The Electric Market Hall, inside Market Row, Brixton, London SW9 8JP (0171-738 4141).

Two contrasting images summed up the debate over mutually owned building societies and insurers this week.

First, Alliance & Leicester Building Society confirmed 21 April as its flotation date. A&L members will each receive 250 shares, worth up to £1,200.

The next day, Norwich Union, the insurer, gave details of its own flotation, planned for May. Almost 3 million members will receive free shares, albeit on a less munificent scale than building society demutualisations.

The plan is that some 1.8 million NU members with a traditional with-profits endowment — such as those linked to mortgages — will get a minimum of 300 shares, worth about £720.

More than 1 million among this number will actually receive more than the minimum, depending on the value of their existing policy. While the exact calculation has not



Nic Cicutti

Bradford & Bingley's loyalty bonus is of mutual benefit to everyone

yet been worked out, no maximum will apply. So those with particularly large policies will be made very happy.

In addition, a further 1.1 million NU policyholders will receive a fixed allocation of 150 shares, worth £360. They include people with life assurance cover, investors with Norwich Union unit trusts and pensioners

with a NU personal pension. However, home and motor insurance policyholders will get nothing.

With all these free shares "floating" around it is hard to see how the mutuals might compete. Which is where Bradford & Bingley comes in. The B&B is determined to remain in the hands of its policyholders.

This week, it too announced that it would reward its members' loyalty with a package worth £100m in 1997. The society is pledging to push its savings rates at least 0.25 per cent above those of its floating rivals: Halifax, Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester and Northern Rock. Variable mortgage rates will also stay 0.25 cheaper.

Bradford & Bingley argues its move, in which it gives profits back to members, is like a flotation but with a slow fuse. A borrower with a £50,000 mortgage, for instance, could save about £900 over seven years, compared to stock market rivals. In future, the society

adds, the benefits to savers and borrowers will be even greater.

Of course, one must wonder why it has taken so long for building societies to respond to the threat from those converting to banks in this way. And there is more than a tiny dose of "poison pill" in the Bradford & Bingley's decision: potential raiders might have to admit that a hostile bid for the society could jeopardise these benefits to policyholders.

Even so, this is good news for savers and borrowers. It opens up the prospect of a minor rates war and an extreme reluctance to push up home loan costs for fear of losing market share. How long it lasts is another matter.

But as long as it does, those extra few pounds in interest from Bradford & Bingley will pay for a nice night out. Or that extra bottle of ouzo at the duty-free — to go with the holiday bought with the proceeds of the Alliance & Leicester flotation perhaps.

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Northumbria BS	0800 581500	4.95% to 5.95%	55	550
First Time Buyers Variable Rates				
Country BS	0181 558 8212	4.95% to 5.95%	55	550
FIXED RATES				
Country BS	0800 126125	4.95% to 5.95%	55	550
VARIABLE RATES				
Country BS	0800 126125	4.95% to 5.95%	55	550
FIXED RATES				
Country BS	0800 126125	4.95% to 5.95%	55	550
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Investors Chronicle 24th January 1997

"The estimated gross redemption yield on The M&G Corporate Bond PEP as at 28th February 1997 was 6.6% and the estimated gross distribution yield was 7.0%." Notes: Income figures refer to gross income. M&G Corporate Bond PEP capital figures are offer to bid. The Building Society income figures are based on the average Share Account rate (source: CSO - Financial Statistics). Sector performance source: Micropal.

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usually because they have not been trained to do so or it is not allowed under the investment rules. But a little bit of homework to decide what is needed, and a "ring round" to compare prices, is often enough. If the provider thinks a customer needs help and advice, they will refer them to an independent adviser.

What of the future? Already many of the financial services now available by telephone can be purchased by computer through the Internet. While this is only just beginning, it could grow as rapidly as telephone services have over the past decade.

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Pensions and PEPs are just a call away, writes Ken Welsby

The other kind of long-term saving where the end of the tax-year matters is a personal pension. If you are not in a company scheme, think hard about putting spare cash into a pension plan of your own - the Inland Revenue rules allow

It's a simple idea which saves the huge amounts of



Most trackers follow the FTSE 100 or the FTSE All Share. The FTSE 100 covers the 100 top companies (those with the highest market capitalisation). The All Share covers about 900 – and its supporters point out that it includes smaller companies which often produce better profits growth.

An alternative to the direct sellers is the telephone-based brokers, such as PEP Direct and the PEP Shop, which offer plans from many big providers – often more cheaply than you could buy them directly. But it's even more essential to act early to meet the deadline.

The Independent has produced a free 32-page *Guide to PEPs*, sponsored by General Accident, a leading life insurance company. Call 0500 125888, or send your name, address and post-code (no stamp required) to *Independent/G4 Life, FREE-POST, Y01550, York, Y01 1BR*.

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Abigail Montrose and Ken Welsby on getting a loan

Others prefer the potential borrowers to complete the form themselves, enabling borrowers to take their time over the form and to enter exact details such as

Buying a home can be a daunting experience and direct lenders find that few of their customers are first-time buyers. But for those who are confident enough to deal over the phone, arranging a mortgage in this way can offer good value and convenience.

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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1036.

Plug your PC into the money markets

There's a wealth of data to be downloaded. By Ken Welsby

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Windfalls from building societies and insurers that abandon mutual status to become public companies will create about 11 million new shareholders in the course of this year.

For most, it will be their first experience of direct share ownership although many, of course, will promptly sell their shares to invest or spend the cash elsewhere. But for those prepared to take the long-term view, windfall shares could provide the first stepping stone towards building a stock market portfolio. If you fall into this category, you need to give the subject a few minutes thought now, rather than waiting until the envelope lands on the mat.

As Charles Vincent, a London stockbroker and investment adviser explains: "Most people come into the stock market by accident. Something happens that either gives them some capital, or puts them in the position where they need to make their existing capital work harder, and they come to realise that they should look at investing in shares."

In recent years, he says, many of his new clients have been managers and executives who were made redundant.

"They have often collected some sort of pay-off, and because they have a certain level of expertise can find part-time or consultancy work which gives them a reasonable standard of living," he says. "But they need to make their capital grow to secure a comfortable retirement – and that leads them to the stock market."

First National, the Republic of Ireland's largest building society, is offering UK savers a range of accounts through its telephone and postal service. These include a 30-day postal account paying 6 per cent gross, paid monthly, on deposits above £2,500. Call 0800 558844.

Towry Law, the independent financial adviser, is offering free copies of its With-Profit

Screening profits: some services such as Infotrade even enable investors to trade through their home computers

Like all private client brokers, Mr Vincent found himself spending large amounts of time explaining to clients how the market works, what moves it, and how to construct a portfolio. All of which prompted him to write the best-selling guide to investment and share trading: *How to be your own Stockbroker*.

The book has been followed up by a software package, *Cybertrader*, which allows investors to analyse share prices, select and manage their own portfolios, track performance and set buy/sell limits, using Stock Exchange closing prices and other information downloaded from the

Internet each night. One key feature is the ability to run separate trading and investment accounts, so that you can look for short-term opportunities as well as long-term growth.

Cybertrader's focus contrasts sharply with Infotrade, which offers a broad range of financial services, including will writing, insurance and mortgage quotations as well as stock market investment.

Both programs use a dial-up link to a central database which then updates information on your PC's hard disk.

For those with a speculative bent, the Infotrade service even covers the Oxfex trading

facility for smaller companies. And there are links to lots of useful information, including sector averages so you can contrast selected stocks with others in the same way of business, and background material from a variety of sources.

But the big bonus from Infotrade is the direct links to three execution-only brokers – ShareLink, Cater Allen's City-Deal and Brewin's Dolphin's Stocktrade service.

Once you have an account with a broker you can place buy and sell orders on-line. The system automatically calculates dividends received and expected, downloading the

information by modem, and the new version, to be delivered next week, calculates your capital gains tax position, if any.

The other big enhancement to the system (available from May) will be daily reports of directors' dealings, often a reliable indicator of company prospects.

It's one thing to have the tools, but knowing how to use them – and make money with them – is quite another story. And that's where the private investor often comes unstuck.

One solution is to join forces with a few friends to form an investment club – essentially a group of people who con-

tribute an agreed sum each month and decide together how it should be invested.

There are hundreds of such clubs around the country, many of them launched and encouraged by ProShare.

Among the most successful is the Maydown Mergers club based in Londonderry, which has 19 members, all working in the local textile industry.

"It started more or less accidentally," said Mike Carroll, the founder. "I read an article about it and we got talking at work. The next thing, word got round and people were queuing up to join."

At launch, each of the 19 members contributed £200 as a lump sum, plus £25 a month, which has just gone up to £30. In the first year, says Mr Carroll, the return was 15 per cent – but in the last three months this has topped 25 per cent.

"We use Infotrade to decide on investments," says Mike Carroll. "At first we did it manually, but there's so much more information you can get on-line."

Cybertrader 0181-904 2010 (software free, monthly subscription for on-line service, typically £10-20 depending on usage and services).

Infotrade 0800 226600 (software free, basic subscription £2.95 a month includes 2 hours on-line. Extra time at £1.55/hr with additional charges for specific services such as real-time prices and mortgage quotations).

ProShare 0171-600 0984, for information on investment clubs.

loose change

Bond Survey. Call 0345 889933 or write to the company at Baylis House, Stoke Poges Lane, Slough, Berks, SL1 3PB.

TSB is offering free copies of its *Money Savings Guide*, which includes tips on paying

less tax on your savings. Call 0500 758400.

Woolwich Property Services, the estate agency arm of Woolwich Building Society, is offering to scrap its fees for anyone who takes out a new mortgage with the society. The company is also offering access to a five-year fixed-rate home loan, pegged at 8.19 per cent. Details from estate agency branches.

Norwich and Peterborough is launching a Canary Account for people who support Norwich City FC. The account pays up to 4.5 per cent gross on deposits above £100,000. The society pledges to contribute 1 per cent gross of money in all accounts to the football club. Call 01733 372222.

John Charcol is launching "cap and collar" mortgages,

one of which promises not to rise above 7.75 per cent until February 2002. They will also not fall below 5.99 per cent. Call 0800 718191.

Midland Bank is launching a Capital Protected PEP, which offers at least 20 per cent over five years of stock market growth linked to the FTSE 100 share index, whichever is greater. Call 0800 100160 for details.

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Prudential cuts the cost of cover

Lower bills are only a call away. By Dave Firebrook

Finding the best – and cheapest – home and contents insurance is one of those time-consuming rituals many of us go through each year.

But now, thanks to Prudential, one of the UK's largest insurance companies, it is possible to obtain home and contents cover in a fraction of the time. And at a fraction of the cost.

For example, Paul and Amanda Nicholson, who live near Lands End, in Cornwall, were able to cut an astonishing £260 off their bill by switching to Prudential.

The couple's savings come courtesy of a revolution in the insurance world. Gone are the days when finding the best price meant going through an intermediary, such as your local broker. Or when you felt obliged to stick with your mortgage lender's insurance policy.

These days, one call to a national telephone centre such as Prudential's is all you need to get cheap cover right away.

Simplicity and low costs come easy to Prudential. The company has some nine million customers worldwide, with £8.2bn under management.

The company's size and the efficient way it is run allows it to deliver some of the best deals on the market. More than 1.75 million people in Britain have chosen Prudential to insure their homes. Over 90 per cent of Prudential customers decided to renew their policies last year – an

outstanding satisfaction rate. Insuring your home with Prudential is easy. All it takes is a simple free phone call – 0800 300 300 – to one of the insurer's friendly telephone consultants. Getting a quote will only take a few minutes.

Moreover, when you decide to take out cover through Prudential, you have the option to pay the premium in one lump sum or by means of 12 interest-free monthly direct debit payments.

The company's Plain Speaking Home Insurance covers both buildings and contents policies. These can be bought singly, or together, which is cheaper.

Prudential's buildings insurance offers:

- Unlimited cover for the cost of rebuilding and repairing your home. This includes permanent fittings and built-in features, such as garages, walls and fences, drives, pools and patios.
- Accidental damage to pipes and cables, glass in doors and windows are all included, as is loss of rent or the cost of alternative accommodation, up to £15,000.

Contents cover is equally straightforward.

- You are automatically insured up to £30,000 for "New for Old" cover.

One free call – 0800 300 300 – is all it takes to cut pounds off your annual home insurance bill. Pick up the phone – in years to come you will wonder how you could have found cheaper cover any other way.

LOOK HOW MUCH YOU COULD SAVE

	Birmingham B61	Tunbridge Wells TN1	Dartford DA1
PRUDENTIAL Plain Speaking Home Insurance	£167.54	£214.74	£287.97
EAGLE STAR Ideal	£234.93	£234.93	£385.61
GUARDIAN Dimensions	£245.39	£357.83	£430.71
ROYAL & SUN ALLIANCE Select	£239.46	£280.66	£331.33
COMMERCIAL UNION Key plan	£210.65	£233.12	£361.26

The quotations are based on a customer aged 30, owning a three-bedroom semi-detached house built in 1955. Sum insured of £80,000 for buildings cover for Prudential Plain Speaking Home Insurance where the sum insured is unlimited. Bedroom-rated contents cover of up to £30,000 (£35,000 Eagle Star and Guardian) for illustrations. New for Old cover, Prudential Plain Speaking Home Insurance quotes include a 15 per cent discount off contents premium for combined buildings and contents insurance, plus £15 off the first year's buildings premium when switching from another insurer. Premium tax of 2.5 per cent is included. Quotations correct at 20/03/97.



Riding high: Amanda and Paul Nicholson slashed hundreds from their home insurance premiums

A couple break the bank

Choosing Prudential for its home and contents insurance paid big dividends for Paul and Amanda Nicholson. The couple were able to save £260 compared with their old policy by choosing Prudential.

The quote for £160 they received last year was also half the cost of the next cheapest estimate Paul had been able to find, despite calling more than a dozen other insurers.

He is delighted with his choice: "We spent the money we saved on a new saddle and bridle for Troy, one of the two Arabian horses my wife enters at shows."

When the Nicholson's moved into their new home near St Just, close to Lands End, three years ago, it seemed natural to opt for their mortgage lender's home and contents policy.

Paul Nicholson was busy launching a new business, called

Two people, one phone call ... and £260 off their home insurance bill

Roots West, a mountain bike tour company which caters for tourists who want to view the beautiful Cornish coastline from a saddle rather than the confines of a car. Amanda was settling into a new job caring for people with learning difficulties.

But then the couple found that despite never claiming on their policy, premiums just kept on rising. The last bill they received was for £420.

Paul decided to act: "I like to get value for money and so I spoke to the bank, saying that I thought the premiums were too high. They

lowered them, but not by much. So I decided to look elsewhere for a cheaper quote."

His calls soon led to keener prices being quoted by other companies. However, it was his last call – to Prudential – that finally paid off: "I had seen an advert and decided to give them a call."

"I was very surprised to be quoted £160 for both home and contents insurance, so I went back to my bank and asked if they could match that price. They said they couldn't, so I went to Prudential."

Cover was granted instantly over the phone and a form was then sent to the couple for them to sign. Within a week or two, everything had been sorted. Paul was impressed: "Prudential was very efficient. All it took was one free call."

Call now

PHONING Prudential is the easiest way to cut a small fortune off the cost of your home insurance. Not only is the company one of the cheapest on the market, there are also other hefty discounts.

- You can get 15 per cent off your contents premium for taking out combined buildings and contents insurance.
- Age-related discounts of up to 20 per cent are available on both contents and buildings insurance if you are aged 45 or over.
- Prudential will also cut £25 off your first year's buildings' premium if you switch from your mortgage lender. Or £15 off your first year's buildings premium if you have never insured with Prudential before.
- Security discounts of up to 17.5 per cent are available off your contents premium if you meet Prudential's household requirements.

All discounts are applied on a

Prudential is a trading name of The Prudential Assurance Company Limited (which is also used by other companies within the Prudential Marketing group of companies). The Prudential Assurance Company Ltd is registered in England and Wales. Registered Office 142 Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2BH. Registered number 15454. The Prudential Assurance Company is regulated in the conduct of investment business by SIB and also provides other insurance products not regulated by SIB.

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The big picture

The Two Jakes
Sun 10.05pm BBC2

The long-awaited sequel to Roman Polanski's 1974 classic, *Chinatown*, finally arrived in 1990 with a muffled thud of disappointment. Again scripted by Robert Towne, but this time directed by its star, Jack Nicholson (above), who doesn't seem to know what he wants to do with the piece. It starts brightly enough, however, and a good cast - Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, Madeleine Stowe, Eli Wallach, Frederic Forrest - make the most of Nicholson's sluggish and surprisingly spiritless direction.

Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend

by Gerard Gilbert

Michel Thomas reckons he can teach even the most academically modest pupil a new language in just five days. It may sound like one of those dodgy adverts in which astounded-looking punters learn Serbo-Croat in their sleep (or their money back), but Thomas taught French to both Woody Allen and the Monaco-bound Grace Kelly in days - and now charges £10,000 for intensive one-to-one language busting. No wonder he's not too keen to share his methodology. Until now, that is.

In *The Knowledge* (Sun BBC2), Thomas, a softly-spoken octogenarian of Polish descent, is recorded in action for the first time, teaching a class of disinterested-looking Islington sixth-formers, one of whom had been advised to give up French because she "had absolutely no aptitude for languages". Thomas starts by exchanging the blackboard and desks for some comfy armchairs and soft lighting ("No one can learn when they are physically uncomfortable," he purrs). By the fifth day, all the pupils are bandying relatively complex French, and speaking in awed terms of Thomas's ability to concentrate and

communicate, seemingly by telepathy. Thomas honed his mental powers during the war whilst being tortured by the Gestapo (learning to mentally blank out the pain) and then subsequently working for American counter-intelligence, where he became famous for eliciting, without torture, detailed confessions from droves of top Nazis.

The other must-see of the weekend is Fiona Shaw as Richard II (Sat BBC2), the latest in the current season of *Performance*. This is Deborah Warner's justly acclaimed Royal National Theatre production of Shakespeare's tragedy. The casting of a woman is no mere gimmick, and Shaw's sympathetic embodiment of "the divine right of kings" gives a real counterweight to Bolingbroke (Richard Bremner, very impressive) and the plotters. And it neatly circumvents the lazy portrayal of Richard as homosexual - and, therefore, as weak.

Mary Golding, who apparently can't understand why she intimidates people, takes on the farming industry this week. If there were anything that needed the full chilly force of *The Golding Audit* (Sat C4)

it is the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, and the even-handed way it subsidises smallhold olive growers in Greece, and massive agri-businesses in Wiltshire. The level of hand-outs to your average grain farmer in southern England is a scandal.

The farmers' answer is, of course, "pay up, or the countryside goes to seed," which brings me by the skin of my teeth to *Travels with Pevsner* (Sat BBC2), in which Janet Street-Porter surveys some of the architectural jewels of North Yorkshire - or the North Riding as Nikolaus Pevsner would have had it in his original guide book. Street-Porter has such a flat delivery that I think she ought to double up with Lucinda Lambton as a TV double act. Cockney and plummy, lanky and little, dead-pan and oh-so-enthusiastic.

And finally a cosy English whodunnit, *Midsomer Murders* (Sun ITV) brings back to our screens John Nettles, he of the Jersey copper series, *Benicaz*. Who killed the elderly orchid collector - the blackmailing spinster, the gold-digging orphan, the cuckolded doctor or the jealous artist? It's only missing Colonel Mustard and a denouement in the drawing room.



The big match

St Helens v Salford Reds
Sat 2.30pm BBC1

This could well be the last year for rugby league's Challenge Cup - possible victim of Sky's new summer Superleague. With it made its own with the distinctive voices of Eddie Waring and then Ray French, the latter of whom will be in the commentary box at Central Park, Wigan. Saints, the highly fancied holders, will be hoping for something special from Paul Newlove (above), the most expensive signing yet in the newly inflationary game.

Saturday television and radio

BBC 1

7.00 *Harry and the Hendersons* (R/S) (1251716).
7.25 *News* (36393483).
7.30 *Children's BBC*: Felix the Cat. 7.45 *Phantom 2040*. 8.10 *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*. 8.35 *The Flintstones*.
9.00 *Live and Kicking*. Sean Maguire and JT plug their singles (S) (78413087).
12.15 *Weather* (7048938).
12.15 *Grandstand*. 12.20 *Football Focus* (2764445).
1.00 *News* (81386629). 1.05 *Racing from Newbury*. 1.15 *Brown Chamberlain Handicap Steeplechase* (47274648). 1.25 *Motor Sport*: look ahead to the RAC British Touring Car Championship at Donington Park (59002716). 1.40 *Racing from Newbury*. 1.45 *Lambourn Handicap Hurdle Race* (83156174). 1.55 *Rugby League*. 2.10 *Racing from Newbury*. 2.15 *Hochstetler's Vet Panacur*. 2.25 *Rugby League*. 2.30 *St Helens v Salford Reds*, the first Challenge Cup semi-final (kick off 2.30pm). See the big match, above (228006). 4.05 *Football Latest* (9600667). 4.10 *Figure Skating*: coverage of the ladies' free skating at the World Championships in Lausanne (4757667). 4.45 *Final Score* (5980261).
5.20 *News*, *Weather* (7) (9466396).
5.30 *Regional News and Weather* (418629).
5.35 *Cartoon* (226209).
5.45 *Dad's Army* (R) (1190754).
6.15 *The New Adventures of Superman*. Lois struggles to prove her innocence (8) (34087).
7.00 *Noel's House Party* (S) (380174).
7.50 *The National Lottery Live*. "Uncle" Bob Monkhouse presides over today's draw. The musical guest is Seal (S) (210629).
8.05 *Crime Traveller*. Holly learns from a television report that Slade has been shot and travels back in time to save his life (S) (520700).
8.55 *News*, *Weather* (7) (176006).
9.15 *Have You Cake and Eat It* 3/4. Continuing the pedestrian adultery drama. Charlotte and Sam (Sinead Cusack and Miles Anderson) struggle to save their marriage (S) (7) (846648).
10.10 *They Think It's All Over* (R/S) (868261).
10.40 *Match of the Day*. The relegation battle between Coventry City and West Ham United is the main event. Ruud Gullit and Alan Hansen are in for analysis (S) (7) (565822).
11.45 *Chalk*. Second-sitting sitcom (R/S) (451377).
12.15 *Top of the Pops* (S) (7) (3204).
12.45 *Jericho Fever* (Sandor Stern 1993 US). New Mexico is held to ransom by terrorists with a deadly virus. Stephanie Zimbalist and Perry King to the rescue (S) (7) (705323).
2.10 *Weather* (8931149). To 2.15am.
REGIONS: Sports. 9.15 *Mind the Gap*. 9.45 *Have You Cake and Eat It* 10.40 *Sportsweek* - Match of the Day. 11.45 *They Think It's All Over*. 12.15 *Chalk*. 12.45 *Top of the Pops*. 1.15 *Weather*.

BBC 2

6.20 *Open University*. The Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (7966754). 6.45 *Volcanic Island* (9694613).
7.10 *The Vermacular Tradition* (1273938). 7.30 *Going to School in Japan* (8623958). 8.00 *Open Saturday* (712803).
10.30 *A Week to Remember* (7741396).
10.40 *Arne Lupin Returns* (George Fitzmaurice 1938 US). Monsieur Lupin being a gentleman jewel thief, originally (in 1932) portrayed by Lionel Barrymore. In this belated sequel, Melvyn Douglas steps into Barrymore's size ten and takes to Paris in the company of a young heiress (400107).
11.55 *A Woman's Secret* (Nicholas Ray 1949 US). Not a vintage Nicholas Ray movie (the first in a double-bill today), but interesting all the same. Maureen O'Hara is the ageing radio singer suspected of murdering her ungrateful protégé (Gloria Grahame). Using a flashback structure, Hurdman J. Markiewicz's script investigates her innocence - or not (5054629).
1.20 *Film 97 with Barry Norman* (S) (87332367).
1.50 *Flying Leathernecks* (Nicholas Ray 1951 US). Another Nicholas Ray movie, not that you would know it. Made on assignment to RKO and Howard Hughes. It's a pretty routine tribute to the Marine Corps squadron fighter pilots, with John Wayne and Robert Ryan at each other's throats against Technicolor back-projection (89740938).
3.30 *The Horse Soldiers* (John Ford 1959 US). Union soldiers John Wayne and William Holden lead sabotage raids behind Confederate lines, while Wayne is beguiled by Southern belle Constance Towers (408700).
5.25 *The Saint*. Simon Templar joins the hunt for a Nazi now living in South America. A young Francesca Annis is among those receiving the benefit of Roger Moore's cocked eyebrow (5078193).
6.15 *Travels with Pevsner*. Janet Street-Porter in North Yorkshire. See preview, above (S) (7) (743209).
7.05 *News and Sport*, *Weather* (7) (170377).
7.20 *Correspondent*. India on a separatist movement in Assam in India and on biker gangs in Scandinavia (S) (492483).
8.05 *Call of the Sea*. Lifeboatmen, a lighthouse keeper and survivors from stricken ships tell of their rescues in the second part of this oral history of the British and their choppy relationship with the sea (S) (895183).
8.45 *Till Death Us Do Part*. An episode from the last (1974) series has Patricia Hayes and Alfie Bass in guest roles (R) (360071).
9.15 *Ice Skating World Figure Skating Championships*. Sue Barker introduces coverage of the ladies' free programme, the final event of the competition from Lausanne (S) (7) (70929).
10.15 *Performance*. Richard II. See Preview, above (S) (7) (54440280).
12.20 *Windows on the World*. Film about director David Farnshaw's "musical circumnavigation", taking in the sounds of Laos, Thailand, India, Zanzibar, Senegal, Cuba and Bolivia (S) (8154033).
1.20 *Global VideoByte*. Top of the paps in Seoul, Hong Kong, Japan and the Philippines (Followed by *Weather*) (7175643). To 1.45am.

ITV/London

6.00 *GMTV*: News. 6.10 *Professor Bubble*. 6.30 *Bananas in Pyjamas*. 6.50 *Bug Alert* 7.15 *Dragonfly*. 7.45 *Disney's Wake Up in the Wild Room*. 8.55 *Power Rangers Zeo* (6321006).
9.25 *Scratchy and Co.* This week's guests are comedian Jimmy Cricket and the Spice Girls (24806006).
11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (25321).
12.30 *Love Bites*. Do boys really think about sex every 11 minutes, and can you find true love on the Internet? With guest Jayne Middlemiss (88087).
1.00 *News*, *Weather* (7) (81304025).
1.05 *London Weekend Today* (7) (81303396).
1.10 *Rugby World Cup Seven*. Highlights of today's pool matches from Hong Kong, introduced by Jim Rosenthal. Analysis by Gavin Hastings and John Taylor (S) (6752667).
3.45 *Cartoon Time* (9495193).
3.50 *Seaside DS* (7) (8353567).
4.45 *News*, *Sports Results*, *Weather* (7) (9090807).
5.05 *London Weekend Tonight* (7) (1261209).
5.20 *Star Wars Trilogy* - the Magic and the Mystery. Documentary hype for the re-release of *Star Wars* (5013648).
6.10 *Early Edition*. US series about the dilemmas of a man whose daily paper carries the next day's news. Gary is faced to choose between saving a young girl or 190 airline passengers (S) (7) (37071).
7.05 *You Bet Davina McCall and Ant and Dec help out* (S) (7) (753795).
8.05 *Stars in Their Eyes*. A bingo caller impersonates Julian Clary, while others dress up as Louis Armstrong and Alanis Morissette (S) (7) (604716).
8.50 *Doomsday*. Conclusion of the multi-part mini-series about the plight of passengers trapped aboard a 747 who are feared to be carriers of a deadly virus. After the CIA decides to have the plane shot down, the captain tries to take evasive action, while a lone scientist frantically tries to convince the President that the lives of the 250 innocent passengers should be spared. With Richard Dean Anderson (S) (96775025).
10.35 *News*, *Weather*, *Lottery Results* (7) (337984).
10.50 *Film Awards*. From the Park Lane Hotel, London. A bevy of celebrities and international stars (Matt Dillon, Cameron Diaz, Richard E. Grant, Elton John) present the second annual *Empire Magazine* Film Awards. Nominated films include *Twilight*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Secrets and Lies* (S) (17483).
11.50 *In Bed with Medliners*. Beefy comedian Bob Mills travels through another collection of ridiculous TV programming (S) (838803).
12.20 *Night of the Big Heat* (Terence Fisher 1967 US). Energy-starved and probably alien cause a winter storm on a Scottish island (they they're welcome down my way any day). Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing investigate (137965).
2.00 *Tropical Heat* (R/S) (4604323).
2.55 *El Niño* News (7811859).
3.45 *Club Nation* (R/S) (8485878).
4.40 *ITV Sport Classics*. Archive action from Oslo's Star Wars (S) (7) (8650507).
5.05 *Coach* (S) (7556491).
5.30 *News* (98946). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

6.00 *Sesame Street* (R) (28377).
7.00 *Dumb and Dumber* (S) (10261).
7.30 *Deeds* (R) (3382716).
7.45 *First Edition*. Jon Snow presents this Channel 4 Schools programme which seeks to analyse world events for younger viewers in an unprejudiced way (R/S) (3207071).
8.00 *Transworld Sport* (81551).
9.00 *Morning Line* (S) (50464).
10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (28280).
11.00 *NBA 24/7*. Comes from Chicago, home of the Chicago Bulls, and includes an interview with Scoop Jackson (S) (15716).
12.00 *Rawhide* (88464).
1.00 *South of Algiers* (Jack Lee 1952 UK). Beautifully photographed and unusually intelligent desert adventure about a band of explorers searching for a lost tomb said to contain the priceless golden mask of Moloch. Jon Heflin leads the archaeologists, Wendy Hendrix is the female lead and Eric Portman is the rival treasure-seeker out to thwart them (S) (32067358).
2.40 *Racing*. Jim McGrath introduces racing from Doncaster: the 3.00 Gainsborough Spring Stakes, 3.40 Worthington Lincoln Handicap, 4.15 Midland Cup, 4.45 Doncaster Shield and 4.45 Cambridgeshire Trophy (S) (3516922).
5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (S) (7) (262871).
6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (261).
7.00 *A Week in Politics*. Vincent Hanna and Andrew Rawnsley review the week's political news and subsequent election fever (S) (1513).
8.00 *The Golden Age*. Mary Golding meets the farming industry. See Preview, above (S) (7) (3957).
9.00 *Last Chance Lottery* (S) (3713).
10.00 *Eurotrash*. Jean-Paul Gaultier and Antoine De Caunes present more recent tribulation from across the Channel (R/S) (50716).
10.30 *The Show*. Bob Mills fronts another of those chat shows with a difference - the difference being that here you get all the backstage business of booking guests, getting them to the studio on time, and so forth (S) (6129303).
11.35 *Hill Street Blues*. More police work from the seminal 1980s Steven Bochco cop show. Captain Furillo tries to contain a vigilante movement, while one of his uniformed officers makes a heroic date (R) (7) (452377).
12.35 *The Client*. So-so legal case series set in the American law courts, and based on John Grisham's best-selling thriller *A Friend of Reggie's* could save Folberg's reputation (S) (5696859).
1.30 *The Grille Show* (S) (78743).
2.00 *Richard Lake*. Three strange mothers who cannot get a date (R) (7) (852859).
2.45 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (74679).
3.15 *Flea* (94762).
3.45 *Bless This House* (R) (13702168).
4.10 *Film Night*. The work of documentary film-maker Errol Morris, and a behind-the-scenes look at the technology being used for the newly re-digitalised *Star Wars* films (R) (7) (8650507).
4.45 *The Best Specials*. Music from McAlmont and Micky Oldfield (R) (337946). To 5.00am.

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (88087). 1.05 *HTV Wales News and Weather* (81303396). 3.45 *senQuest* DS (22020). 5.05 *Central News* (9456979). 5.10 *Central Match* - Goals Extra (220006). 3.45 *Johnnie Walker* (4691859). 3.05 *Film: The Seafarer* (8781548). 4.30 - 5.30am *Funny Bunker* (58197).
CENTRAL
As London except 12.30pm Premier (88087). 1.05 *HTV Wales News and Weather* (81303396). 3.45 *senQuest* DS (22020). 5.05 *Central News* (9456979). 5.10 *Central Match* - Goals Extra (220006). 3.45 *Johnnie Walker* (4691859). 3.05 *Film: The Seafarer* (8781548). 4.30 - 5.30am *Funny Bunker* (58197).
ITV WALES
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Russia cuts its losses and agrees Nato link

Phil Reeves
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin yesterday emerged from the two-day Helsinki summit having extracted few gains from Bill Clinton in his long campaign against Nato's move to expand into Central and Eastern Europe.

After a day of tough negotiations, the United States and Russia issued a joint declaration which indicated that Moscow had won few concessions over Nato expansion although it is now ready to sign an agreement defining a special relationship with the alliance.

However, the summit did produce limited progress on arms control and - in what was clearly intended to reinforce its claim to be a world player - Russia moved closer to fulfilling its long-held ambition to become a member of the G7 nations.

The statement said that,

while continuing to disagree over Nato enlargement, the US and Russia would "work, together and with others, on a document to establish a co-operative relationship between Nato and Russia as an important part of a new European security system."

But, crucially, the statement said that the agreement would be "at the highest political" level, omitting the term "legally binding". This means that it will not, as the Russians previously demanded, have to be ratified by the parliaments of the 16 member states of Nato.

The presidents agreed that Javier Solana, the secretary-general of Nato, and Yevgeny Primakov, Russia's Foreign Minister, should finish drawing up the Nato-Russia document in coming weeks, in order for it to be completed before July, when the alliance plans to unveil its new members - almost

certainly, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland - at a summit in Madrid.

Yesterday, Mr Yeltsin said that he understood that the document would be signed by all 16 Nato heads of state before Madrid - which suggests that both sides are now committed to reaching a final deal by then, bringing an end to a dispute that has been a source of political bitterness and tension for months.

Asked whether little progress had been made, the Russian president replied robustly: "Not at all."

Earlier in the day, while the two presidents were still at the negotiating table in Mantiyalmi, Finland's seaside presidential mansion, top Russian officials delivered a warning against any further advances by the alliance.

"A discussion about further expansion would have tragic

consequences, not only in Russia but in all Europe," said Sergei Karaganov, of the presidential council.

"The Baltics would find themselves between two striking fists. Russia would lose trust, and the West would lose trust, and the Baltics would lose a lot."

The Russian blast of rhetoric, which was clearly part of choreographed publicity plan, was less significant in its content, which were familiar, than in its timing.

It was intended to ensure that Mr Yeltsin was seen by Russians to be taking a tough line. The loss of world status is a particularly sensitive wound domestically - and one into which the president's old adversary, Genady Zyuganov, the Communist leader, was yesterday eagerly rubbing salt.

"Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] has not had any victories for a long time, except over his own



Finish president Martti Ahtisaari welcomes Bill Clinton and his entourage on the second day of the Helsinki summit. Photograph: AP

people and country," he said. "I don't believe in his international successes. Everything he does is linked to destruction."

But the Kremlin's message was also a signal that - while the

Boris and Bill show was warm-spirited enough - the Nato issue is far from closed.

The president's spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, also weighed in, pointing out mid-

talks that Mr Yeltsin's position on Nato had not changed, "not even in nuances". Such remarks were echoed by other Russia officials - including Boris Berezovsky, the powerful deputy head of the Security Council - who were invited to Helsinki by the Kremlin as part of a successful attempt to steal the limelight from their American counterparts.

In this, they have been helped by Mr Clinton, who seemed content to allow Mr Yeltsin to play the starring role, completing his comeback after months of illness.

The debacle over the US president's undignified arrival at Helsinki on Thursday - being offloaded from his aircraft by a hydraulic FinnAir catering lor-

ry - was an outright gaffe. And he could do nothing about the wheelchair to which he has been consigned after his fall at the golfer Greg Norman's house.

However, Mr Clinton and Mr Yeltsin - meeting for the 12th time in four years - made slightly better headway on arms control, by agreeing guidelines for a Start III agreement which would reduce long-range missiles to 2,000-2,500 warheads each by 2007 - marking an 80 per cent reduction compared with the height of the Cold War.

And Russia extracted a promise that the June summit in Denver, Colorado, of the G7, which the Russians have long aspired to join, will be called "the summit of the eight".

Summit was triumph of substance over style

As US-Russian summits go, this was more important than any since 1990, yet without the tension and drama which characterised the most memorable encounters of Cold War times. One US official described Bill Clinton's talks with Boris Yeltsin as "the most substantive and intense they've ever had", and indeed profound matters were at stake - Nato's relationship with Russia, the future of European security and nuclear arms control.

Yet for all their differences, the emphasis was ultimately on co-operation as much as confrontation. In contrast to Richard Nixon's summits with Leonid Brezhnev, or Ronald Reagan's meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Helsinki summit lacked three vital ingredients to be a truly gripping spectacle.

First, the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 and Russia's turn to free-market democracy have transformed the context. No summit these days can be a piece of chilling real-life theatre, pitting against each other two great ideological adversaries with the power to blow up the world several thousand times over.

Secondly, the impression of superpower equality projected by Cold War summits has palpably faded. Russia, for all its size and strength, is not in the same military or economic league as the United States, and Mr Yeltsin's approach in Helsinki was dictated partly by resentment that the US and its allies are exploiting Russia's relative weakness to reconstruct Europe on their terms.

Lastly, despite their disagreements, familiarity has to some extent bred reassurance and lessened the scope for anger.

This was Mr Clinton's 12th meeting with Mr Yeltsin since 1993: and besides, they exchange correspondence and talk on the telephone more often than probably any previous leaders in Washington and Moscow.

The Helsinki summit was therefore quite different from, say, the meeting which John Kennedy held with Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna soon after the young president's inauguration in 1961. Before that summit, Kennedy was consumed with worry that Khrushchev would write him off as a shallow, soft-touch president incapable of defending the free world against the onward march of communism.

Khrushchev did indeed launch major challenges to the US, including the erection of the Berlin Wall and the attempt to deploy missiles in Cuba. But Kennedy's skillful and determined handling of the latter cri-

Helsinki may have lacked drama, but issues of real importance were discussed, writes Tony Barber

sis, coupled with his decision to greatly increase US involvement in Vietnam, left Khrushchev in little doubt about Kennedy's commitment to containing communism.

The Helsinki summit, staged in one of the world's most placid capitals, offered Mr Yeltsin little opportunity to engage in the kind of intimidating showmanship that Brezhnev put on for Nixon in Moscow. A lover of fast, luxurious Western cars, Brezhnev once drove his rival at hair-raising speed through the Russian woods, in a manic celebration of the *de-teme* era that was to jerk to a halt in the late Seventies.

The most extraordinary summit was perhaps that of October 1986 in Reykjavik, where Mr Reagan, meeting Mr Gorbachev for only the second time, came close to agreeing to the abolition of all the world's nuclear weapons. Margaret Thatcher and other European leaders were horrified by what they saw as Mr Reagan's naive idealism.

Total nuclear disarmament



Boris Yeltsin: Wants to stay in the superpower league

has never been on a summit agenda since. But at Helsinki Mr Clinton and Mr Yeltsin discussed a US proposal to reduce each country's nuclear arsenal to 2,000-2,500 warheads from more than 10,000 in the late Eighties.

While recent US-Russian summits in Moscow and Washington may have lacked passion and urgency, Helsinki was the scene of a crucial encounter in 1990 between Mr Gorbachev and George Bush. This was when the US President sought Moscow's support for a US-led military campaign to drive Saddam Hussein's forces out of Kuwait.

N: DON'T MAKE YOUR SMOKE

ers' Warning
g Nicotine



Just in time, some facts come out of the dark

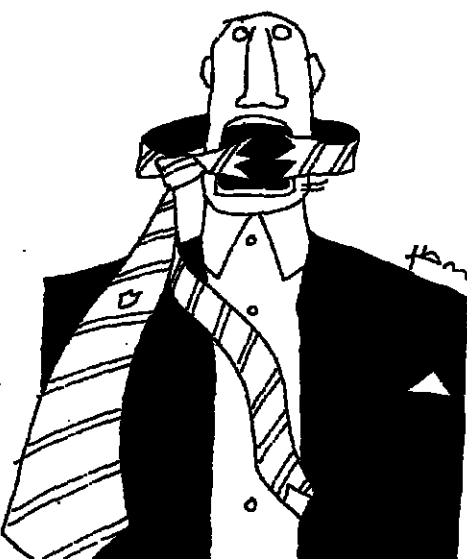
The decision of *The Guardian* to publish privately-obtained evidence on the conduct of MPs is a contempt. Whether the Commons judges it to be a contempt of Parliament remains to be seen; that may well be affected by the likely Labour domination of the Commons after the election. *The Guardian's* actions have helped Labour, and the party is unlikely to punish the paper for that timely assistance. But whatever Parliament decides, it was certainly an act of contempt in the non-legal sense: contemptuous of the Prime Minister's decision not to help speed up publication of the report and contemptuous of the actions of some of the MPs involved.

This newspaper shares that contempt, and therefore applauds *The Guardian's* decision to publish the documents. They do not add greatly to the general state of knowledge or public belief about the individuals concerned, but they fill in fascinating detail. The MPs have complained that, because the paper has selected from a much larger mass of documents, the full story has not been told and they have been denied natural justice. This is not an argument to dismiss out of hand; we need to beware Salem always. But there are competing interests here. On the one hand, the dignities of Parliament and the rights of individual members, who are shortly to be candidates. But

on the other is the right of the public to know specific and important things about people putting themselves forward for election to the House of Commons - which is still, in spite of everything, our single most important institution.

By refusing to let the relevant committee sit on, John Major had deliberately and with calculation sought to deprive voters of this information. Accused MPs had protested, apparently sincerely, that they too wanted the report published before the election to clear the cloud of suspicion over them: so the leader of the Conservative Party was denying his party's prospective candidates the justice they claimed they needed. A very strange business indeed. We would have hoped that Parliament itself would have revolted at it; but we did not expect it to. Nor did it.

So in these circumstances, *The Guardian* broke the rules, and it was right to do so, because it was acting in the wider public interest, exposing things which those in authority had wrongly tried to keep hidden. That attack yesterday provoked a counter-offensive of denials and injured protests from some MPs and indeed from Mr Major himself. But we can all now see what the Prime Minister wanted to be hidden during this campaign, and his moral authority on the subject is low, particularly after his eruption



of anger about "smears" in the House on Thursday.

What now? The first lesson is straightforward. Britain has ceased to be a country where things can be hushed up easily. Once upon a time, British businesses might have done favours for MPs, and had favours done in return, and no whistles would be blown, and no documents would have been leaked. Today, public servants are less deferential, many of the key business figures are non-establishment outsiders - from the al Fayed in one way, to Richard Branson in another - and the old SW1 *omertà* is impossible to guarantee. It may be that this passing generation of MPs has been more tainted than any other. It is equally possible that envelope-stuffing for MPs has been going on, in quiet corners, for years: we simply never knew.

The second lesson is a subtler one, and partly answers the first. In this more open democracy, we have to stop thinking of MPs as a class. They are more varied than almost any other profession and it is important, as this sleaze story slithers on, to remember that some are dishonourable, and very many are not. A badly behaved backbencher or three should not more taint our view of politics generally than a bribe-taking official makes us give up on public life - or, dare we say it, an incompetent journalist should lead one to

assume that everything in the papers is nonsense. MPs generally have become butts of public ridicule and hostility. But if things have recently got out of hand, then we shouldn't blame only the miscreant members: the rest of us should be careful of our own reactions. As voters and democrats, we need to discriminate; discrimination, indeed, is our duty and our power.

Finally, there is a simple moral lesson, which has not changed much since the first humans sat in the back of a cave and traded arrow-heads. If you make a secret deal with anyone, you put yourself at their mercy forever. Only politicians with very little understanding of human nature would be happy to do this. After all, we all know that people fall out. Friendships sour. Business alliances shift.

Neil Hamilton, Tim Smith and the others who took money from Mohamed al Fayed seem not have understood that basic point. They gave away not just their independence, but also their political fates. For that almost unbelievable, bone-headed stupidity, if for nothing worse, they proved themselves failed politicians. Now that their electorates have the facts that Mr Major would rather have kept hidden this spring, we hope that the democratic machine will kick in, by kicking them out. We deserve better politicians than these.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Forced into cynicism by our undemocratic way of voting

Sir: A response from one cynic to your front-page article "An historic choice for Britain - the case against cynicism" (18 March).

I am not cynical by nature. I don't want to be cynical about British politics. But I've had cynicism thrust upon me by our uniquely undemocratic first-past-the-post electoral system.

When Douglas Hurd decided last year to retire as MP for Witney at the forthcoming election, a handful of leading local Tories met in secret session to choose his successor. They then announced to the press who the next MP for this safe Tory seat was to be.

And the electorate? They will merely rubber-stamp the decision on 1 May. It is unthinkable that any other candidate could win.

There is no effective political representation under our Byzantine system for the minority who will decline to vote Tory, no choice of Tory candidates so we can opt for the soft-leftie, nothing to discourage abject cynicism about the whole charade.

MARK DORAN
Oxford

Sir: There are many things that I hope will happen on polling day. One is that my vote, for once, will count. However I live in one of the many areas of the country where the constituency boundaries have changed beyond recognition. In order to apply my vote tactically I need information specific to the new constituency area, since there is no form. Am I likely to get it?

If I fail to receive data about how my candidates are faring vis-à-vis one another, I am considering adding to my cross on the voting paper the phrase "in fact, anyone but Mr ABC". I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that my message is going to be shown to the candidates in order to decide whether it will count as a vote or a spoiled paper.

RICHARD WELCH
Nantwich, Cheshire

Sir: When Derek Young, a Liberal Democrat candidate, states (letter, 18 March) that the format of a TV debate between the party leaders would "reach deaf proportions" if the Green Party etc were allowed to participate, is he accepting the logic behind John Major's wish to exclude the Liberal Democrats? That is, large political parties should be allowed to deny small parties a fair chance. It appears that the Liberal Democrats

are all for a stitch-up, provided they share in the stitching.

An alarming number of people are finding nothing for them in any of the three "main" parties, and the young especially are not voting at all. To reinvigorate democracy and political thought, small, and nascent, political parties must be given the oxygen of a fair hearing. The public will sort out the genuinely good ideas from the cranky. If the old parties are to be allowed to pull up the drawbridge there is no hope for democracy.

CHRISTOPHER PADLEY
Market Rasen, Lincolnshire

Sir: Candidates from all parties must not forget that there are on average 10,000 disabled people in each constituency - which in marginal seats could be enough to influence the outcome of the election. But will disabled voters be able to get in to their local polling booth to cast their vote?

Scope's research at the last election, found that only 12 per cent of polling stations were fully accessible for disabled people. This is an outrage. Scope calls on all parties to ensure that improvements are made this year to polling stations, access to public meetings and election materials.

If all 6.5 million disabled people in this country were able to exercise their democratic rights, we might see a real change in the country's political agenda.

RICHARD BREWSTER
Chief Executive
Scope (formerly The Spastics Society)
London, W1

Sir: Like Pascal Smart ("I'll not vote - it won't change a thing", 18 March) I have no intention of voting for any political party. Unlike him I am not young (47) and have no interest one way or the other in the legalisation of drugs, or in the EU, single European currencies and so on. I am very interested in the planet that I live on and its future.

The only reason I am likely to vote will be for a party who will tackle global warming, environment and habitat destruction and address the car/public transport issue to the benefit of all. I realise that global warming is a worldwide problem but a start has to be made somewhere, and soon, and here is as good a place as any. When these problems are addressed I may possibly take an interest in the other issues which feature prominently in election campaigns.

NOEL CORRAL
Castle Acre, Norfolk

Sir: A "real job" is one that maintains the worker doing the job, his partner and all the kids they've produced



The Prime Minister in action on his 'soapbox' - but does it say 'Port Sunlight' on the side? Photograph: Adam Butler

Major's clean political platform

Sir: Anyone born before the Second World War should be able to answer Jean Ma "son's" inquiry about the origins of Mr Major's portable podium (letter, 21 March). In the 1930s wooden boxes in my parents' house were invaluable containers for bricks and other toys for the children, and useful for keeping oddments together in cellar or tool-shed.

The ones I remember had "Port Sunlight" stamped on the sides, with the rays of the rising sun and a lifebelt or Lifebuoy emblem, in red and black I think, identifying the brand of soap and its maker. The bottoms were made of two broad

slats, but the sides were strongly jointed at the corners, creating a solid container, rectangular in shape.

I don't know when these boxes went out of use but I believe all the packaging was cardboard when I worked briefly in Pears' soap factory after the war. At all events, pre-war soapboxes were very serviceable and quite strong enough to stand on if you turned them upside down. They would raise you some 22 centimetres off the ground, or 9 inches as some members of the Conservative Party might prefer to say.

NIGEL GLENDINNING
London E3

Intimidation on the train

Sir: If I was dismayed by Mrs Johnson's story (letter, 19 March), I was horrified by Ivor Warburton's response (20 March) on behalf of Virgin West Coast Trains.

Just how does he propose that a mother should check that those around her are comfortable with her feeding a baby? Should the inquiry be addressed to those in adjoining seats, those across the aisle or should all those passing through the carriage also be given the opportunity to object?

Breast-feeding is a perfectly natural biological function and attitudes such as those expressed by Mr Warburton only serve to intimidate women who wish to offer the best possible source of nourishment to their babies.

I hope that Virgin will rethink this policy. Does it also apply to occupants of Virgin's airline seats? Dr SUE GORDON
Morphet, Northumberland

Sir: It must be nearly 50 years since I breast-fed my baby on the train from Manchester to London. Covered by a large shawl I had no trouble at all: in fact I think the other passengers in a full carriage were both sympathetic and interested. How silly can some men get?

ALISON LEAKEY
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire

Sir: What a perverted society we live in when a young woman is castigated for breast-feeding her baby on a train, yet other young women are paid large sums of money for displaying their over-developed mammary glands on the third page of a popular daily paper!

ANNE MARTIN
Haywards Heath
West Sussex

Dapping in Ireland

Sir: The main reason for the familiarity of the cheap black pinballs known as "daps" in South Wales (letters, 18-21 March) was that they were worn all the time (not just for games) by kids whose families could not afford boots, as in my own primary school in the Thirties.

Certainly "dap" meant "bounce", both noun and verb. The only other usage I know is in trout-fishing, where "dapping" is a method used on Irish loughs in which a large mayfly is bobbed or bounced across the surface using an ultra-long rod and gossamer line.

R PERROTT
London N5

BBC gets a good price for programmes

Sir: I was interested to read your comment (18 March) following the signing of the BBC Worldwide/Flextech joint venture.

You suggested that the Flextech investment, which, incidentally, could be as much as £150m, "might seem like a rather small price to pay for all those billions of pounds worth of licence-fee investment". You further suggested that this could be seen as "giving away a highly valuable commodity for next to nothing".

This implies both a misunderstanding of the structure of the joint venture and of the fair trading arrangements which underpin the separation of BBC Worldwide finances from our licence fee-funded activities.

The joint venture will, from day one, pay BBC Worldwide the full market value for programmes

supplied under the programme licence agreement that has been negotiated. This will provide an immediate return on the licence payers' investment in programmes and generates further funds for our programme-makers serving both BBC1 and BBC2.

In addition, when the joint venture moves into profitability, there will be a further income stream back to the BBC from any distributable profits agreed by the board, and of course the BBC will also be participating in the creation of valuable assets in the channels we create, as has been amply demonstrated by the valuation placed upon UK Gold.

This seems to me to suggest that the BBC has done a very good deal for the licence fee-payer, the BBC's programme-makers and BBC Worldwide.

R W PHILLIPS
Deputy Director-General
Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide
London W1

LETTER from THE EDITOR

We have secret polls which we shall be revealing next week showing the gap between Labour and the Tories down to just five points. Also, as everyone who is anyone now knows, there is a serious sex scandal about to break which involves senior members of the shadow cabinet, a Russian actress and some furry animals. There are reports that Neil Hamilton is defecting to New Labour and will be publicly welcomed by Tony Blair. Oh yes. And a shooting war may be about to break out in the British-managed Georgiou Islands.

Only joking. But it would take all of the above to convince people that this election was going to be a down-to-the-wire, close contest. And what alarms the news business generally is that voters won't want to read or watch the six-week game, if they think they know the result. It's a lazy and undemocratic reaction, since the parties will be laying out detailed plans which will affect our lives, and these are the weeks when they are most open to challenge.

All we can do is promise you plenty of election-free coverage to refresh you, and ensure that the real issues are teased out and fully argued over. I notice that it tends to be older readers who are most interested. The ignorance of younger voters about the democratic system is worrying; though no fan of loading ever more on to the national curriculum, a proper course in civics and political education seems essential. Democracy is not bred in the bone. It has to be learned, and defended. If we don't test our would-be rulers now, we can hardly complain about the government we'll get later.

We are popular, it seems. The *Daily Telegraph* is shamelessly mimicking *The Independent's* masthead and slogans in an attempt to bribe readers away: the house newspaper of right-wing Tory Catholics chirpily proclaims itself "independent". At Wapping, meanwhile, the editor of *The Times* is belatedly trying the independence game, arguing that though he agrees with Tory policies, the Tory party seems likely to lose, and

therefore he may be obliged to change sides. (So long as Rupert lets him.) What, meanwhile, of *The Guardian*, one paper which because of its long-term leftism, could least plausibly get involved in such mimicry? Well, this week, advertising its election coverage, it too decided it was "truly independent".

While welcoming sinners repenting, and noting that we must be doing something right, I can't help feeling there is a small difference between genuine independence of spirit,

The Sun's excited conversion to the cause of New Labour has left not a dry eye in the house. It has been one of the funniest things in journalism for years

and pre-election sales gimmickry. Judging by our recent sales, quite a few others think so too.

At the tabloid end of the market, *The Sun's* excited conversion to the cause of New Labour has left not a dry eye in the house. It has been one of the funniest things in journalism for years.

But given that *The Sun* was lured into Blair's camp by his Union Jack-waving article about the inequities of Euro-federalism, this is surely bound to end in real tears. Within weeks of taking office, a Labour cabinet would have to take key decisions about the intergovernmental conference and give equally clear signals about monetary union. Nothing I have heard makes me think those decisions and signals will please the anti-European *Sun* in the least.

And if it is forced to make another 180-degree turn, the fact that it has been made to look a fool this spring will stoke its anger to purple-faced hysteria.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I doubt now whether anything can stop machines taking over our world - Kevin Warwick, professor of cybernetics, Reading University. I don't love the country. I want to go back because I love the people - Han Dongfang, Chinese dissident who was imprisoned and tortured after Tiananmen Square.

I am happy to get out of the House of Commons - John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, as he embarks on his nationwide election tour. The French are nostalgic for their royalty, you know. It's partly guilt. They killed their parents and they will never get over it - Prince Henri d'Orleans, heir to the non-existent French throne.

We keyed in the Prince's name and the only thing that came up was a pub in Seattle. I think Charles was a little distressed - Martyn Lewis, BBC newsreader, describing an incident when he showed the Prince of Wales around an Internet facility for youngsters.

They are very popular, lots of people like them. They are very hairy and take up lots of leg room - they've got 32 legs - spokeswoman at Dudley Zoo, where four tarantulas have been named, in honour of the election, John, Tony, Paddy and Alex, after the party leaders. I must have been the unluckiest sex symbol ever. You couldn't see my face, but I was bombarded with letters from lovely ladies everywhere - Dave Prowse, who played Darth Vader behind a mask in *Star Wars*.

'Lads' of the TUC win fair deals for women at work

Sir: Diane Coyle, in an otherwise interesting discussion of the labour market ("Listen lad - women's work counts too", 20 March), misrepresents a new TUC report to suggest that the TUC is interested only in full-time male workers.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The TUC has been campaigning in the courts, in Parliament, in Brussels and in the media to improve the lot of part-time workers. Thanks to union campaigning part-timers can no longer be excluded from company pension schemes and the Government was forced to reduce the qualifying period for part-timers to gain protection against unfair dismissal to the same two-year period as for full-timers. TUC research then showed that this had no adverse effect on part-time jobs, contrary to the warnings of ministers.

Our campaigning for a minimum wage, the Working Time Directive and the Social Chapter promise to bring real benefits to women part-timers, who are the lowest paid and

least likely to have paid holidays.

Our report was spurred by claims that the UK is a rip-roaring success because it has more people in work than other countries. What we found was that this was due to there being fewer young people in full-time education than elsewhere, more people working when they are past retirement age and, yes, there being more part-time workers here than in most other EU countries. The UK is no better than others at creating the quality jobs that men and women need to give them the kind of income required to bring up families and save for retirement.

JOHN MONKS
General Secretary
Trades Union Congress
London WC1

Sir: A "real job" is one that maintains the worker doing the job, his partner and all the kids they've produced

between them. Five million women aren't "taking advantage of the flexible labour market", Diane Coyle and her middle-class mates might be, but the overwhelming majority of women working part-time are topping up the inadequate wages of the men in their lives.

The Labour Party is right: real jobs are breadwinner jobs.

JUDITH BURNS
London SE4

Sir: Diane Coyle omits to mention the Conservatives' double standard. New part-time jobs are included in the total for job creation, whereas those without a job who are actively seeking part-time work are conveniently left out of the published unemployment figure.

MIKE DEAN
Department of Health Sciences
Aldwin College, University of York

the saturday story



Tasteless and irony-free it may be, but for Reggie Nadelson

Oscar night is about winning, about hope – and about one helluva party at her place

That America has always had the wit, talent and money to make good and sometimes great movies is self-evident. That it expresses this at Oscar time – maybe less plain, I don't care. I love Oscar night. Oscar is the biggest night of the year at my house, everyone laying bets, yelling at the TV set, guzzling beer and wine, eating popcorn and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Out there are parties where people actually know the stars. At my house someone always has a friend who is the third cousin of the art director on the animated short subject. I don't care. I love Oscar more than I love the 4th of July, more than Halloween or Valentine's Day because Oscar is our honours list, our knighthoods. What's more, even here in Manhattan, Oscar night has almost no irony, which means you can indulge in high emotion and low taste.

The thing about Oscar is that it's about winning and we are talking archetypes here, we are talking a Pindaric ode to the guy who wins the big race. It's no surprise that so many Oscars go to actors and movies who win the race, sometimes literally.

Take *Jerry Maguire*. This is a comedy about a sports agent played by Tom Cruise. In it, Cruise loses all, then wins it all back and he's good, really good. Cruise has become a real movie star because he does what he does brilliantly, no more, no less. He works a very small territory with the determination of a prospector who has a small but fabulous allotment. But the real joy of the picture is Cuba Gooding, Jr. nominated for Best Supporting Actor. In *Jerry Maguire*, Gooding really is the guy who wins the race, or, in this case, the \$11.4m football deal.

This is Gooding's first big part and he is hilarious and surprising in it, an actor who, at five foot 10, went up for the part of a monster football player and won it. Another Oscar archetype. Give us a speech, Cuba, and make it long. No Oscar speech worth its statuette should be less than five minutes or contain fewer than 22 repetitions of the word "love" and/or "wonderful." Unless it is political. Political is OK if you make the night one to remember. Remember when Brando sent a Native American maiden to collect his Oscar? When George C Scott turned his back? I love it.

You want odds? We give odds at my Oscar party along with the roast chicken and the mozzarella sandwiches. Odds on which star shows the most bosom. Odds on which outfit will be



And the winner is... Sharon Stone and Cuba Gooding Jr. (below left), favourites for the long, moving speech award

Why I love the Oscars

the most tasteless. Actually, in recent years the clothes have been worryingly tasteless. Most of the women get themselves Armani'd to the eyeballs or cloaked in the Stalinist simplicity of Calvin Klein. In the bad old days, you could count on at least one starlet for some T&A, you could count on Streisand for see-through and Cher for flesh.

Not only do I love Oscar, I like pre-Oscar, the period before the awards proper when the stars parade into the ball in their evening clothes in the hot California sun. I can't remember which year it was, but once, during the television pre-Oscars, Oprah Winfrey was on hand, as I recall. "What would you call that colour," she gushed staring into the cleavage of some starlet who replied: "I call it the colour purple."

Nobody's immune to Oscar. Last year, Randy Newman, the most ironic songwriter in America, got up on stage and played his nominated song. He wants to win. Everyone wants to win, even the British and this year there are a lot of them. And do the self-effacing, self-deprecating, ironic Brits back modestly into the limelight? They do not, thank God. They are out there whooping it up.

Secrets and Lies, *Fargo*, *Sling Blade*, *Shine*, it's a weird year, really. So many of the films are lit-

tle movies, independent movies, good movies, British movies. So many of the actors and directors are British, although I think it's a shame. *Evita* was overlooked probably out of spite. There's always spite on Oscar night, especially where great big stars are concerned. This year *Evita* and Madonna got the spite vote.

Anyhow, you can split a lot of hairs over the British business. *The English Patient*, for instance, a hot Oscar favourite – is it British? Is it American? Canadian? Is *The English Patient* Hungarian? Who put up the money, where's the beef? Who cares? Myself, I don't care if the flick comes from Burkina Faso or the money's Andorran, so long as it makes me laugh, makes me cry, keeps me entertained for a couple hours.

The tasty thing about so much British talent on tap at Oscar time, however, is it proves how classy the American movie biz really is. It flies right in the face of all those critics who, at Oscar time, claim the American business is spoiled and philistine. It gives no comfort to London luvvies, anti-American division, who generally break out into a pustulant little outburst around Oscar time.

Can we talk? I want Geoffrey Rush for best actor. I want him because *Shine* is a wonderful movie and Rush an unlikely star. I also want him because it's a breakthrough role in the Oscar Goes Disabled Category. For the most part, actors in these roles depend on spectacular physical tics; for the most part the

movies are pretentious. I'm talking *Rain Man* or *My Left Foot* or *The Piano*. But Rush makes his character charming, sexy even, a guy you want to know even when he's busy cracking up.

While I'm on the subject of self-congratulation, Oscar often favours not just the disabled but the dead. Also the nearly dead. The TRIBUTE to those who have died the previous year is one of my favourite features on Oscar night. Then there are the special awards, the lifetime awards, the stars barely standing who are wheeled on to standing ovations. I love it.

The physically impaired, the near-dead – Hollywood loves them at Oscar time. But there's nothing it loves more than a tale with a social message. This year it's *The People vs Larry Flynt*.

Larry Flynt is a movie that's not only sinfully dishonest in the alleged cause of free speech, it's also very dull. Drab. Lifeless.

It concerns Larry Flynt, the founder and editor of *Hustler* magazine who, paralysed from the waist down in a shooting, went on fighting for his right to publish hard porn. Flynt against the censors. Flynt who took a stand.

There's a problem. Milos Forman's picture, which stars Woody Harrison, celebrates the First Amendment, but it tells a crappily lie in order to do it. The film portrays Larry Flynt as a cuddly pornographer, a kind of free-love hippie who merely added some soft-focus spread shots to the world

of male magazines. In fact, the real world of Larry Flynt and *Hustler* would have meant photographs of women gang-raped, of women lashed to cars, women put through meat grinders, women, if I remember right, in concentration camp scenes. All for the sake of pornography. Call it free speech. But a real portrayal of Flynt's world would have meant an X-rating for the film and you don't win an Oscar with an X.

OK. Enough about Flynt. It's late. By 10 on Monday evening, the action at my house will be heating up. People on the edge of their chairs. People falling asleep on the table, as after a large Christmas dinner. Will *The English Patient* win? *Secrets and Lies*? *Lauren Bacall*? The smart money in New York is on Bacall, of course.

But what does it all mean, the outfits, the tear-stained speeches, the golden statuettes? It's about winning. The Oscars, the Olympics, the gold rolling in. This year, it's also about the little guy, the underdog, the foreign actor, the person nobody ever heard of or bet on who comes up a winner. A star is born. It's another great story. I love it.

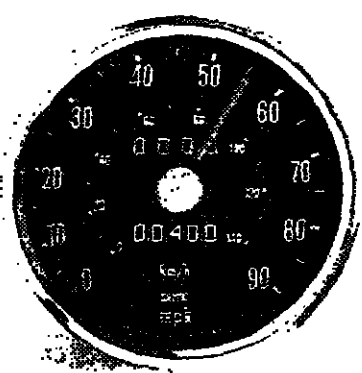
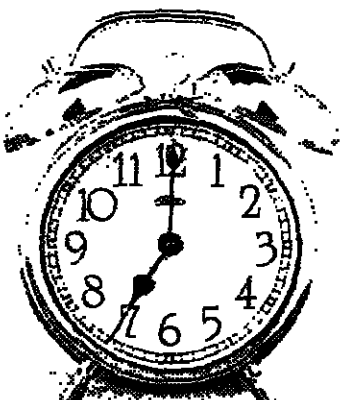
So much part of the yearly cycle of life is Oscar night that the phrases have entered the vernacular. I was talking to someone recently and he said: "Well, of course, she's unhappy she wasn't nominated," and I never had to ask, "nominated for what?"

It could just be that Oscar has replaced the Presidency as the ultimate goal. That out there at Oscar parties all over the country people are sitting around staring at the guy in the tux, the babe in the beautiful dress, and thinking, who knows? Maybe one of these days I'm going to get an Oscar. One day maybe my book will be made into a movie, the movie nominated and, come Oscar night, the winner is ...

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What a shock to see *The Sun* supporting Labour. It's enough to make you want to vote Tory. It describes the Tories as "tarnished with sleaze, riddled with scandal and beset by fools". That sounds quite like *The Sun* to me.

Despite the trumpeting on the front page, inside the paper the adoration was decidedly lukewarm. The Labour party are warned about the dangers of going against what *The Sun* wants them to do. It's tragic that this rag sees itself as important enough to dictate its simplistic spurious terms in a pseudo-serious fashion. As for Tony Blair saying he's absolutely delighted with their support – I couldn't physically have got the words out of my mouth.

While I'm on the subject of *The Sun*, it was interesting to see how it treated two similar stories of sexual harassment this week. One involved a driving instructor, old, balding and unattractive, touching a woman's breasts. The other, a horse trainer, no doubt rich, with hair and not unattractive, pinching a female jockey's bum on live television. The first incident was described in terms of lechery and perversion, whereas the

second came across as all in good fun and a bit of a laugh. So, women, if you're going to sue for sexual harassment, try and make sure the bloke's not much cop to look at and sidle.

I did a show in London on Wednesday night and just as a matter of interest asked the audience which of them would vote Labour. A muted response, perhaps five voices out of a hundred, greeted my ears. "Blimey," I thought, "I've got myself a Tory audience here." Wrong. An even less enthusiastic response greeted that question. "Right," I said, "who's not going to bother to vote at all?" The place erupted. Looks like the comedy-going population are swamped with political apathy.

Gena Lee Nolan, one of those adored and slobbered-over women, "a Baywatch Babe", is to make the ultimate sacrifice for her fans and give birth to her baby live on the Internet. There will be computers in the delivery room, supplying sound of Gena in labour. She wanted pictures of the birth to be available to her fans as well, but thankfully her husband has talked her out of this.

How delightful that such a private and intimate moment will be captured for all the Net needs to hear and savour. Given that there is so much porn on the Internet, it seems likely that many uninformed teenage boys may well stumble across this and assume that the grunts are due to an altogether more salacious practice. Don't do it, Gena. Listen to your old man (and I don't say that very often).

The Sex Education Forum said this week that boys' sex education should be taken more seriously by schools, because boys may be scared to show their ignorance and this could be dangerous, as the traditional method of learning about sex, for boys, tends to be in groups behind the bike sheds. Fair point, and while

they're about it perhaps they could tackle the ability of males to discuss emotional issues, respect for women and numerous issues of peer group pressure which make teenage boys behave like cave-men.

The poor old Church of England has been forced into advertising itself to try to stem the tide of people seeking spiritual succour elsewhere. They also want to attract young people to the church, so have used the same old acquisitional images that are used to sell anything from beer to aftershave. Therefore, you have a BMW thrown in and some people dancing at a club in London called the Ministry of Sound.

For once, though, those starting in the advert have not taken the huge fees normally

associated with selling your soul to the highest bidder. I suppose God would have been none too pleased if they'd all nipped out and actually purchased a BMW on the proceeds.

Unfortunately, any teenagers, attracted by the ad, once they actually get to church will find it's the same old dull and ancient set-up it was at harvest festival, the time lots of us last set foot in the old place.

It seems that Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, may have perpetrated the Pittdown Man hoax, as revenge on the scientific establishment, men he resented because they had attacked a psychic he admired. Conan Doyle was a well-known practical joker. My favourite story about him is the one in which he sent a postcard to several of his friends which said, "We are discovered. Flee." Even though he had just made this up, a friend of his did make off to the Continent, leaving a question-mark over what he was actually involved in.

Anyone who hoaxes the scientific establishment is all right by me. These geezers in white coats are far too smug most of the time.

Road rage

It is all too obvious to me how one cross word can lead a man to assault his neighbour's car

David Aaronovitch

You wanna hear naïve? This is naïve. "It was so minor. One cross word. In the context of one's daily hassles it was something that you would consider to be completely irrelevant."

The astonished speaker was 34-year-old Mark Gilling. The irrelevant word was had with his neighbour the Hon Hugh Donovan, and it concerned parking in the half-bourgeois enclave of Fulham.

As a consequence of this brief encounter Mr Gilling's Porsche and Mr Gilling's Range Rover were scratched or dented on many occasions over 13 months. Mystified as to who could be behind these attacks, Mr Gilling eventually prevailed upon the local plod to mount a surveillance operation.



One night a video-camera caught the 63-year-old Hon barrister sneaking out under cover of darkness and vandalising his neighbour's expensive vehicles.

I call Mr Gilling's surprise "naïve", because it is all too obvious to me why one cross word might lead to someone assaulting his motor. In fact, many of us underachievers would need no cross words at all to want to express our dismay that a 34-year-old should be able to afford both a Porsche and a Range Rover.

Furthermore, a photograph of the Range Rover shows that Mr Gilling has retained the infamous bull bars, increasing the likelihood that any accident involving a child (God forbid) might be fatal. Frankly, most of us have some motive for running our Yales down Mr Gilling's bodywork.

Mr Gilling - doubtless a good and innocent man - may not have understood how his vehicular statements affect others. Surely, though, he must comprehend that to have a dispute with one's neighbours about parking - be it minor or major - spells big, big trouble.

In my little London street we have historically been blessed with great parking. Many fellow residents are Liberal Democrats, and have tended to travel everywhere by bicycle. Others are young, and have had little need for a car. But just recently this has begun to change. Babies have been born in extraordinary numbers, and behind the stork comes the car. Those with none, get one. Those with one, get another for the nanny. A street in which each

of us has grown accustomed to parking outside our very own doors has become one in which such an outcome is statistically most unlikely.

None of this has broken out into feud - yet. True, we recently reported an old, dumped Honda with an out-of-date licence disc to the council, and made the mistake of boasting about our Straw-style communitarianism to our next-door neighbours. "It was ours", they confessed gloomily, "and we got a £40 fine." Oh, how we laughed!

Having discussed this with friends, I feel sure that this is the coming issue - in towns, at any rate. We all have the same symptoms: feelings of anger that people without children should park outside the houses of those with them; a tendency to repark one's car in a more favourable spot whenever the opportunity presents itself (I wait by the window for the sound of an engine); fury at being frozen out of the residents' parking areas of Chelsea, while no similar interdict applies to those few Chelsea motorists seeking to park in Kentish Town; the occasional foray to leave a tart, anonymous note on the windscreen of any car left parked across one's house for a whole weekend. Etcetera.

But where does this lead? Returning to Fulham Street for a moment, one elderly resident was quoted as saying that the car-scratcher had "brought in the tactics of the council estate". Little did this woman know that a dispute about parking in a housing estate in Kensley, Kent, recently climaxed in a pitched battle involving a shotgun and a baseball bat.

There is, of course, no legal entitlement to park outside - or in any proximity to - one's own home. The regulation of such social relations depends entirely on voluntary agreement between private citizens. In other words, there are no rules. What I may consider to be antisocial behaviour - forcing me to drag £150-worth of Safeway shopping plus three dog-nosed-decorated street - may seem utterly reasonable to my hard-working neighbour.

It is in precisely these circumstances that respectable lawyers (or journalists for that matter) sweat the streets at night, screw-driver or paint-stripper in hand.



Downright bad boys or just men in need of some guidance? Danny Baker, Chris Evans and Paul Gascoigne take some relaxation

How to be a real man without the spewing

According to the General Household Survey two of the Spice Girls are not getting on. And poor old Mel C was driven to admitting on television that though she felt broody, she hadn't found a suitable father. She answers to the name Scary, but she is attractive and wealthy. If she can't find the man of her dreams, then who can?

On average, two out of five single British women say that they are not in relationships. Let's assume that, as in past generations the majority of them will seek out a Mr Right. But the feminist joke now goes that men are like public lavatories - either desirable but occupied or vacant but useless. Of course we could solve the problem by the more efficient use of the "occupied" - what captains of industry call "sweating the assets". However, I can't quite see polygamy catching on, especially not among young women. Who wants to be on the romantic equivalent of the substitutes' bench?

So let us turn to the vacant but useless. As if by magic, the picture of three young men staggering from a London club swims before our eyes. Ladies' names Danny Baker, Chris Evans, and Paul Gascoigne were splashed across the tabloids this week, bleary-eyed and blowy after night's drinking. I can see Scary Spice's dilemma if this really is the face of Britain's young men.

We know that girls are out-

performing boys at school, right up to university level, and that the gap is getting wider. Forecasts predict that women will start to catch up in status and pay, even at higher levels in industry. With the decline of manufacturing, men are heading in the opposite direction. Inevitably, women will expect more from their partners. The men just aren't up to it.

Well, maybe not. Let us return to the now notorious photograph. I will for the moment leave Gascoigne out of consideration: until he is cleared of the allegations that he uses his fists against women as readily as he uses his feet on a ball, he need not occupy our attention. Imagine instead that the third figure were Arsenal's Ian Wright, and you have a trio of bad boys - arrogant, mouthy, boorish and overpaid, the worst possible role models.

Baker's moment of madness gave BBC bosses no option but to sack him. Evans' megalomania made him impossible to work with. Wright's volatile temperament, which has now left him suspended for several games, deprived him of a regular England shirt. Whatever little boys are made of, these three and thousands of others like them have it in bucket-loads. The conventional wisdom is that they grow out of it, and that family life will mellow them. There is



Trevor Phillips

Unfortunately no evidence that this holds true for many young men. These young men may be bad examples, but they are also good examples. Baker is a brilliant scriptwriter and gifted radio

has been built by exactly the same sort of awkward talent. Snobbish talk of barrow-boys in the City and financial scandals have obscured the fact that deregulation blew away the dead hand of the upper classes and allowed in people without manners, but with huge vigour and inventiveness.

I am not arguing that we should ignore boorish behaviour, stupidity or wrongdoing. Not every lout is a potential Ian Wright. Not every wh in a BMW will be a George Soros. But by dismissing the bad boys we may well be dismissing much of the talent we will rely on in the future.

Inevitably, women will expect more from their partners. Are the men up to it?

It's time to pay some urgent attention to our boys. We can no longer knock off the rough edges by war or a turn in the colonies. But we need to know why so many of them are being excluded from school. We need to find ways of being real men that don't involve regular spewing and head-butting. And most of all we need to prepare boys to be decent husbands and fathers.

As much as I resist the automatic importation of American ideas about what British problems, the drive in North America for a serious and committed programme of mentoring of teenagers by older men is paying dividends. It works through

Back to grammar school for the Tories

What is the government's policy on adverbs? To judge from the recently unveiled campaign slogan of the Conservative party, the smack of firm grammar is not a high priority. "You can only be sure with the Conservatives," is their battle cry, but surely that "only" is in the wrong place.

The correct placing of "only" has been a matter of debate for more than 200 years. In 1762, Robert Lowth wrote: "The Adverb, as its name imports, is generally placed close or near to the word, which it modifies or affects, and its propriety and force depend on its position." He then contrasts the two sentences: "I only spoke three words" and "I spoke only three words". Fowler, writing in 1926, is particularly impatient when quoting one pedant who insisted on putting "only" next to the word it qualifies: "There speaks one of those friends from whom the English language may well pray to be saved, one of the modern precisians who have more zeal than discretion, and wish to restrain liberty as such, regardless of whether it is harmfully or harmlessly exercised." Fowler generally advises us to put "only" wherever we like, as long as we avoid confusion.

In the *Longman Guide to English Usage*, however (Penguin, 1996), Sidney Greenbaum and Janet Whitcut, who are generally on the liberal side of grammatical pedantry, advise: "In formal writing, 'only' should come next to the word it qualifies." Consider, therefore, the different meanings of "Only John unveiled the slogan" (nobody else did); "John only unveiled the slogan" (he can't be held responsible for writing it); and "John unveiled only the slogan" (not the entire manifesto).

The question about only being safe with the Conservatives, therefore, comes down to two points: is it a formal, or informal statement; and is it sufficiently ambiguous to cause confusion?

When they say: "You're only safe with the Conservatives" do they mean you're not safe with anyone else? If this is what they mean, is there any chance that anyone encountering the phrase might take it literally to mean that you're only safe with the Conservatives? You're not well-off, you're not healthy, you're not educated with the Conservatives, but you are safe. If there is even a small chance that any voter could believe that, then they really ought to have put "only" in the right place.

William Hartston

A battle for control of women's bodies

Last week a judge threw out the case of Ms S, the woman who was compulsorily "sectioned" under the Mental Health Act and then had a court-enforced Caesarean. He dismissed it on a technicality. She should have started the action within three months of the birth. In fact, she failed to do this because, after rejecting her baby at first, she had had to fight social services for custody.

Women often do not know that they must act quickly if they want to sue a hospital trust, and have to consider the pros and cons while in the hazy, exhausting and emotionally topsy-turvy first 12 weeks of motherhood, when those who have been traumatised by labour may have conflicting feelings about their babies, replay what was done to them over and over again in their minds, and find it impossible to make decisions.

Incredibly, the judge did not seem to see that to detain in a psychiatric hospital a woman who wants a home birth, and then perform a compulsory Caesarean section on her, might be a matter of public interest. If he had, he might have decided that the important issues raised when a woman is operated on against her will should outweigh late application. Ms S will appeal, of course, and there are six other cases in the pipeline.

The Caesarean section rate was 10 per cent in the early Eighties in England, and 15 per cent in 1994.5. No one yet knows what it was last year.

Few obstetricians do Caesareans because they want to be free to get to the golf course. There are many, however, who are not prepared to wait



Sheila Kitzinger
Hi-tech procedures have led to a rise in Caesareans. Sheila Kitzinger argues for less surgery and more sense

for a baby to be born and who lay down strict time limits. They turn birth into a race to the finishing-post, with operative delivery the penalty when labour does not meet their norm. Women are grateful that their babies have been "saved" by a Caesarean, not realising that the way labour was "managed", starting with induction, followed by interventions that screwed up the normal physiology of labour, resulted in a need for Caesarean section when the cervix did not dilate.

Epidurals, especially if given before 5cm dilatation, double the Caesarean rate. But the main culprit is electronic fetal monitoring. That can increase the chance of Caesarean section by an astonishing 160 per cent. A costly technology that has become routine in most hospitals, without any evidence that it makes birth safer, leads to costly surgery.

Obstetricians often say that the rise in Caesareans is due to the threat of litigation. If something bad happens to a baby, it is safer to show that you did something rather than nothing, and getting the knife out is an obvious way to demonstrate concern.

But a major reason why the Caesarean rate is shooting up is that obstetricians have become deskilled. Older ones know how to deliver a breech baby vaginally. Midwives in traditional cultures massage and coax babies into more favourable positions through the mother's abdominal wall. Younger obstetricians are not experienced enough to do this, and think it is not worth the bother. Yet six randomised, controlled trials have shown that two out of three babies can

be turned, and will stay head down. This halves the rate of Caesareans. Even if a baby stays in the breech position there is no evidence that a Caesarean is safer, and around half of all mothers of breech babies can give birth vaginally if they have the chance. Two randomised trials have shown that breech babies do not benefit from Caesarean section, and their mothers are much more likely to suffer pelvic infection.

Some Caesareans are life-saving. Others aren't, but the decision is often imposed on the mother. She feels relief, and only later questions whether it was necessary. Many women become distressed a couple of months after an emergency Caesarean, feel cheated, lose self-esteem and suffer flashbacks and panic attacks.

Not a week passes but I listen to women's accounts of horrendous experiences of obstetric management. They describe being made to lie on their backs for hours harpooned to the electronic machines, intravenous drips and catheters, often being subjected to failed forceps and ending up with an emergency Caesarean section. It is reasonable for women who have been through an experience like that to prefer an operation under controlled conditions with guaranteed pain relief. Modern obstetric management has made the birth room a torture chamber, and offers release from it with elective Caesarean section.

But it is not only deeply traumatised women who opt for Caesareans. Most women, if told by an obstetrician that a Caesarean is best for the baby, go along with professional advice. Obs-

tetricians see operative delivery as a quick-fix solution to ever-widening problems.

An obstetrician once snapped at me that he couldn't stand back seat drivers. He meant women who had ideas about what they wanted in childbirth. He had to be in control of that wayward womb, that fearless woman who puts the foetus at risk. He, and only he, must manage the potentially pathological process of labour and delivery. Many obstetricians think like this, though they may be willing to make concessions, and like Nick Fisk, an obstetrician at Queen Charlotte's, where one woman in four has a Caesarean, spend time talking to women - though they find it more difficult to listen to them. Professor Fisk claims that there is "increasing maternal input into childbirth". It is not clear what he means by this. Women have always had a lot of "maternal input". Doctors could not produce babies without them. The debate about Caesarean section is about control over territory. And the disputed territory is a woman's body in pregnancy and childbirth.

Women seek Caesareans not just because they can't face pain, or want to keep their vaginas "honey-moon fresh" (one way Caesareans have been promoted in the US) but because they hope they can maintain some control over what is done to them. When they describe horrific birth experiences we should listen to them, give accurate information, and, I believe, support them in getting an elective Caesarean with the next birth if that is what they want.

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obituaries / gazette



V. S. Pritchett: 'I am a writer who takes short breaths'

For surprisingly many years V.S. Pritchett (Sir Victor Pritchett) was the best short-story writer and, equally, the best impressionistic literary critic in Britain. He was also the author of a very distinguished travel-book, *The Spanish Temper* (1954), five estimable novels, and a memorable two-volume autobiography (*A Cab at the Door*, 1968; and *Midnight Oil*, 1971). But the fact that his reputation was always high and suffered no great fluctuations tended to obscure the real distinction and importance of his achievement.

As a short-story writer Pritchett attached a very high value to the "ordinary". He was occasionally said to cherish eccentricities, but this was a mistake, as he himself remarked. He was not interested in prodigies and monsters and was not driven by obsession, or at least on the scale of a Balzac or Dickens. What interested him was ordinary people, that is to say unique people, and the temporary or momentary relationships and bizarre conjunctures into which life has a way of thrusting them.

His characters tend to be people who have been knocked about by life and bear the record of it in their body and features - people who, moreover, clutch at some favourite and pathetic life-myths, just to hold themselves together. His tone is rueful, and in *A Cab at the Door* he throws out the remark: "I think most of my stories have been laments." This is not quite how they strike the reader, however. For, we find, the strange relationships and conjunctures in his stories, come complete with "rules"; they are very far from meaningless and, as likely as not, gen-

erate a curious, unprepared-for glory and beauty of feeling.

A story of his was often sparked by some casual or banal everyday phrase, as in "You Make Your Own Life", or a queer and unguarded one, as in "Many Are Disappointed" - accidents of ordinary speech seized on in much the same spirit as the accidents and collisions of providence. It is a trait which Pritchett shares with Hemingway, and he acknowledged a debt to the early Hemingway.

His literary journalism was, in a way, a product of the Second World War. There was a shortage of new books, and thus week by week, in the *New Statesman*, Pritchett would produce a "middle" on some dead or classic writer. The choice of topic, very likely, would come from the literary editor, Raymond Mortimer; and at all events the whole inspiration and challenge lay in coming to an author, free, perhaps in almost complete ignorance.

A neat biographical tie-up suggests itself here. For the continual refrain of the young culture-hungry and culture-fearing Pritchett, as depicted in *A Cab at the Door*, was the groan: "Oh, not another writer!" and "I shall never catch up!" and these weekly *New Statesman* essays represented a most cheerful and triumphant "catching-up", and indeed going-beyond. Pritchett was always proud to regard himself as a man of letters and as one who came "at the tail-end of a long and once esteemed tradition in English and American writing", that of the metropolitan and non-academic writer for the "common reader". It seemed to him a blessing that he escaped university, and this was no de-

fensive posture: he genuinely distrusted what went on in university literature departments and remarked in *A Man of Letters* (1986): "Even now, I am shocked to hear that literature is 'taught'."

There is a loose pattern to Pritchett's literary essays. Two thousand words just give time to make a quick tour round a classic author, but by no means too much time; hence there will be much dependence on epithets - "the gorgeous, garrulous Huck", or "Her (Edith Wharton's) prose has a presentable, cold pomp". Much use, too, will be made of the suggestive paradox, which floats unasked into Pritchett's mind in the act of writing, for instance, "Kipling is our first American writer."

Usually there is a sober and informative feeling-of-the-way, and then at certain happy points the prose takes wing: it mounts and flutters off opportunistic verbal conceits, a kind he made peculiarly his own. For instance, speaking of Ford Madox Ford: except in his two best books, he had so many ideas that he was exhausted by the time he got to the page. He had not the breath. He creates the spell of someone always on the move, the pen itself was capricious.

In an uneffortful way, again, he could be memorably witty. One remembers his engaging comment on George Eliot: Here is a mind that has grown by making judgements as Mr Gladstone's head was said to have grown by making speeches.

He laboured over his stories, burning much midnight oil, and threw off his literary essays with ease; nevertheless these two sides to his writing have many affinities - among them, of course, his own belief that "I am a writer who takes short

breaths". The literary essays represent a kind of innocent promiscuity, a series of casual relationships entered into with zest and terminated with too much regret or backward look. As a critic, and equally as a teller, he is absolutely not a generaliser and shows little desire for a philosophy of life or theory of literature.

The important thing, for him, was not to get stale, and he never did get stale, being kept going by a certain toughness and euphoria and by sheer delighted curiosity. His life, though not in the least an ivory-tower affair, was, unlike Hemingway's, lived in perfect harmony with books. On this his own comment may be taken as just: "I have always thought of myself - and therefore of my subjects - as being 'in life', indeed books have always seemed to me a form of life, and not a distraction from it."

E. N. Furbank

To have been born over a toyshop in Ipswich seems an appropriate entry for Victor Pritchett, who remained for nearly a century a child's fresh vision and capacity for enjoyment, writes Lettice Cooper.

A young man working in the leather trade to which his father had consigned him at 15, he wanted to go and earn his living in Paris "because it would be different". "How different?" "Well, in France a street would be called a rue." The reply was typical of someone who from the age of 10 had been preoccupied with words, a happy preoccupation which was to last him all his life.

Victor Pritchett was a very distinguished author who remained modest, and who, perhaps because of this, fully

enjoyed his success. His devoted and much-loved wife, Dorothy, tells a story of his knighthood. The letter offering it to him arrived when he was away from home, and she was opening his mail. Knowing that the first thing he would do on his return would be to get a desk shirt out of his cupboard, she hid the official letter among his shirts. Waiting below she heard his shout of joy as he ran downstairs to share his news with her.

As a child Pritchett spent many holidays with his Yorkshire grandmother at Jedburgh. He loved travel, as a young man, especially in Spain, for which he always had a strong feeling. "It was a country that made a person of you," Lane in life he loved the Cornish cliffs; he wished any place from which he could watch the movements of the sea, as from the window of his study on the fourth floor in his tall late-Nash house in Regent's Park Terrace he watched the movements of the clouds.

Even in his late eighties he used to climb the stairs every morning at 9am to this eyrie, wishing that he did not need at his age to go on writing for his living. But once he had reached his desk, and filled the small pipe he always carried in his pocket, all regrets vanished, and he was surprised when Dorothy called him down to lunch at one o'clock.

She had spent the morning answering the telephone for him, typing his manuscripts, on which, to his regret and hers, his handwriting grew smaller and more difficult to read with every week of his life, but they enjoyed laughing over the mistakes together. He always enjoyed laughter. He wrote once that it seemed to

him like "the sexual act which is perhaps the laughter of two bodies". Laughter, he thought, wakes up the mind, and I have seen him in a few minutes' amusing speech shake a dull meeting into active life.

He belonged to no organised religion. He was not acutely interested in politics; he did not want to write about them. He had a private myth about frontiers. It sprang perhaps at first from his immense enjoyment of travel. Romance was to cross a border, but a frontier became for Pritchett something more unconscious, and though he talked to me about it I was not sure that I understood all that it meant to him. He was glad that he lived in a kind of frontier, the beautiful houses in Regent's Park Terrace, and the people who lived in them being only just round the corner from the crowded, bustling streets of Camden where Pritchett often went in the afternoon to do some of the household shopping.

Here he sometimes saw a face or heard a scrap of conversation which turned out to be the germ of a short story. What the frontier the passage from the surface to the equally true but far richer world of his creative imagination?

Victor Pritchett, writer and critic: born Ipswich 16-December 1900; FRSL 1959; CBE 1968; President, International PEN 1974-76; RLI 1975; President, Society of Authors 1977-97; CLA 1988; CH 1993; married 1936 Dorothy Roberts (one son, one daughter); died London 21 March 1997.

* Lettice Cooper died 24 July 1994.

The Rev W. Awdry

The name of the Rev W. Awdry will go down in history as that of "the Thomas the Tank Engine Man". It cannot be otherwise, since he is the creator of the pantheon of steam-driven childhood gods which run the rails of that enchanting railway system on the fictional Island of Sodor.

The testament is clear in the form of a literary, publishing, merchandising and financial phenomenon: 25 small books of stories which have sold some 50 million copies, in varying shapes and sizes and in a dozen different languages, spawning videos, toys, games, clothes and a hugely successful film series made for television.

When this Church of England clergyman began to achieve fame as a children's writer, the press dubbed him "the Puff Puff Parson". Although far too reserved to complain, he disliked the nickname because it seemed to denigrate both his vocation as a priest and his passion for railways. These were the two lines of life that ran straight through his 85 years and which were laid down in his childhood as the son of a vicar with a passion for steam engines.

The Rev Vere Awdry had built a model railway layout in his Hampshire vicarage garden, in Ampfield, and the young Wilbert Awdry (whose unusual first name combined those of his father's favourite brothers, William and Herbert) soon became "Superintendent of the Line". On walks around the parish with his father he met and talked with local railwaymen. Long before he could read, Wilbert would sit poring over the pictures in his father's bound copies of the *Railway Magazine*.

Following the birth of his brother, George (who was to play a significant role in the "discovery" of Sodor), the Awdry family moved to Box, in Wiltshire. As Wilbert lay in bed, as a child, listening to the trains running on the nearby Great Western Railway line from Paddington to Bristol, the seeds of the Railway Series were sown. "There was no doubt," he told me once, "that steam engines all had definite personalities. Little imagination was needed to hear, in the puffings and pantings, the conversation they were having with one another."

Wilbert and George were the children of their father's late years: the had already been twice married and bereaved and had another son who had fallen in

the retreat from Mons; and Vere Awdry's death, at the age of 74, left his wife - some 35 years his junior - in financially straitened circumstances. However, the sons maintained their devotion to all things connected with railways and, in Wilbert's case, his love and respect for his father undoubtedly led him towards a career in the Church.

After being educated at Dauntsey's School in Wiltshire, Wilbert went to St Peter's Hall (now St Peter's College), Oxford, then recently founded as an educational establishment - based on the beliefs of the Evangelical wing of the Church of England - for the education of sons of low-income families.

Wilbert's academic achievements were modest: when he gained his BA it was, he said, "only a Third Class - but a brilliant Third Class, a 'Gamma double plus'". After studying Theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, but before proceeding to ordination, he spent three years as a teacher at St George's School in Jerusalem. It brought the lands of the Bible vividly alive for him; he also met Margaret Hale, a teacher at the English High School in Haifa, to whom he became engaged and, later, married.

Ordained deacon at Winchester Cathedral in 1936, Wilbert Awdry became a curate first at Odham in Hampshire, then at West Lavington in Wiltshire, as assistant to an auto-catholic clergyman who had once been his school chaplain. Difficulties arose in 1939, when - with war in Europe an inevitability - Awdry declared himself a pacifist. His stand was typical of a determination (some might say stubbornness) and quiet courage that marked his character. Asked to leave the parish, he was on the point of giving up his work as a priest when the pacifist Bishop of Birmingham appointed him to a curacy at King's Norton.

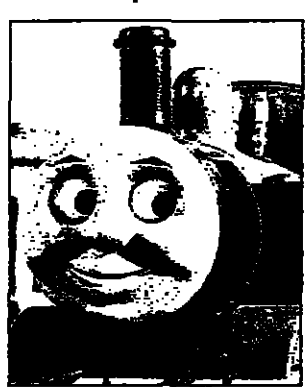
It was in Birmingham, in 1942, that an event took place with a significance no one could have foreseen. The Awdrys' first child, Christopher, was confined to bed with measles. Awdry amused his son with a story about a little old engine who was sad because he had not been out for a long time. When Christopher asked what the engine's name was, his father replied - seizing on the first name that came to mind - that it was Edward. In this way, by question and answer, he invented a

Cinderella-type story which he entitled "Edward's Day Out".

The story was told over and over again and eventually written down and illustrated with simple line-drawings of railway engines with faces drawn on the front of their smoke-boxes. However, the adventures of Edward had remained nothing more than a family entertainment had Margaret Awdry not chivvied her husband into churning out his publication.

In 1945, after being turned down by several notable publishers, the book was accepted by Edmund Ward and appeared as *The Three Railway Engines*. The format, which was to remain the same for all the books in the series, was crucial to its success: a small, oblong, essentially child-sized volume containing an engaging story, simply told, with colourful (but not very sophisticated) pictures by an unacknowledged artist named William Middleton.

A second volume was quickly commissioned and Wilbert Awdry's most famous engine character made a cheeky debut in *Thomas the Tank Engine*. This time the illustrations, also uncredited, were by Reginald Payne, who established the palette of vivid blues, reds, greens and yellows that were to play such a vital part in the visual



Thomas the Tank Engine: Awdry's first book was published in 1945

appeal of the Railway Series. In 1946, Awdry was given his first parish at Elsworth and Knapwell, near Cambridge, where he stayed for seven years before moving to Emmeth, near Wisbech. In 1965, he retired (or, as he put it, "went into private practice") and moved to a sensible red-brick house in Stroud, Gloucestershire, where his study - an agreeable jumble of railway books, maps and timetables - was denoted by a "STATION MASTER" sign on the door.

During these years, Awdry continued writing books for children and, from 1957, the *Red Engine* in 1948, published a new Railway Series title each year until his last, in 1972, *Tramway Engines*. With the success of these books, it has now become fashionable to sneer at Awdry's literary style but, at its best, it was - like the prose of Beatrix Potter - tightly structured and economically written while, at the same time, employing satisfyingly repetitive rhythms and an often challenging vocabulary.

The stories featured the already established engines - impish Thomas, industrious Edward, argumentative Henry and proud and pompous Gordon - as well as introducing new characters in such volumes as *Toby the Tram Engine* (1952), *Percy the Small Engine* (1956) and *Duck and the Diesel Engine* (1958).

The books harnessed Awdry's knowledge and love of railway engineering and history and had to be "true-to-life", although the fictional engines had human personalities and voices, their activities always followed the rules of the railroad and virtually all the exploits described were based on something that had happened, somewhere at some time, to a real railway engine. Those adventures - mostly mishaps - included common derailments as well as more surprising disasters such as an engine running off the end of a jetty into a harbour or an unexpected disappearance down a disused mine. As often as not, however, these crises were brought about by the arrogance, stubbornness, jealousy or ambition of the engine involved.

The morality of the stories was clear and Christian: misbehaviour led to suffering and retribution; however, provided the culprit showed repentance, restoration always followed. "The important thing," Awdry said, "is that the engines are punished and forgiven - but never scrapped."

The analogies between the Christian faith and the ways of the railway are obvious: the engines are meant to follow the straight and narrow way and pay the price if they go off the rails. No wonder Awdry enjoyed drawing the parallels between railways and the Church. "Both had their heyday in the mid-19th century; both own a great deal of Gothic-style architecture which is expensive to maintain; both are regularly assailed

by critics; and both are firmly convinced that they are the children of, and being sent to, their ultimate destination."

Despite the morality which prevails in their universe, Thomas and his cronies have nevertheless fallen foul of various establishment figures: banned from some public libraries either for being poor literature or, worse, for being politically incorrect with mindless female carriages chattering along in the wake of their engine lords and masters. Such prejudices run deep and last long, despite the fact that Awdry later introduced two female engines named Daisy and Mavis.

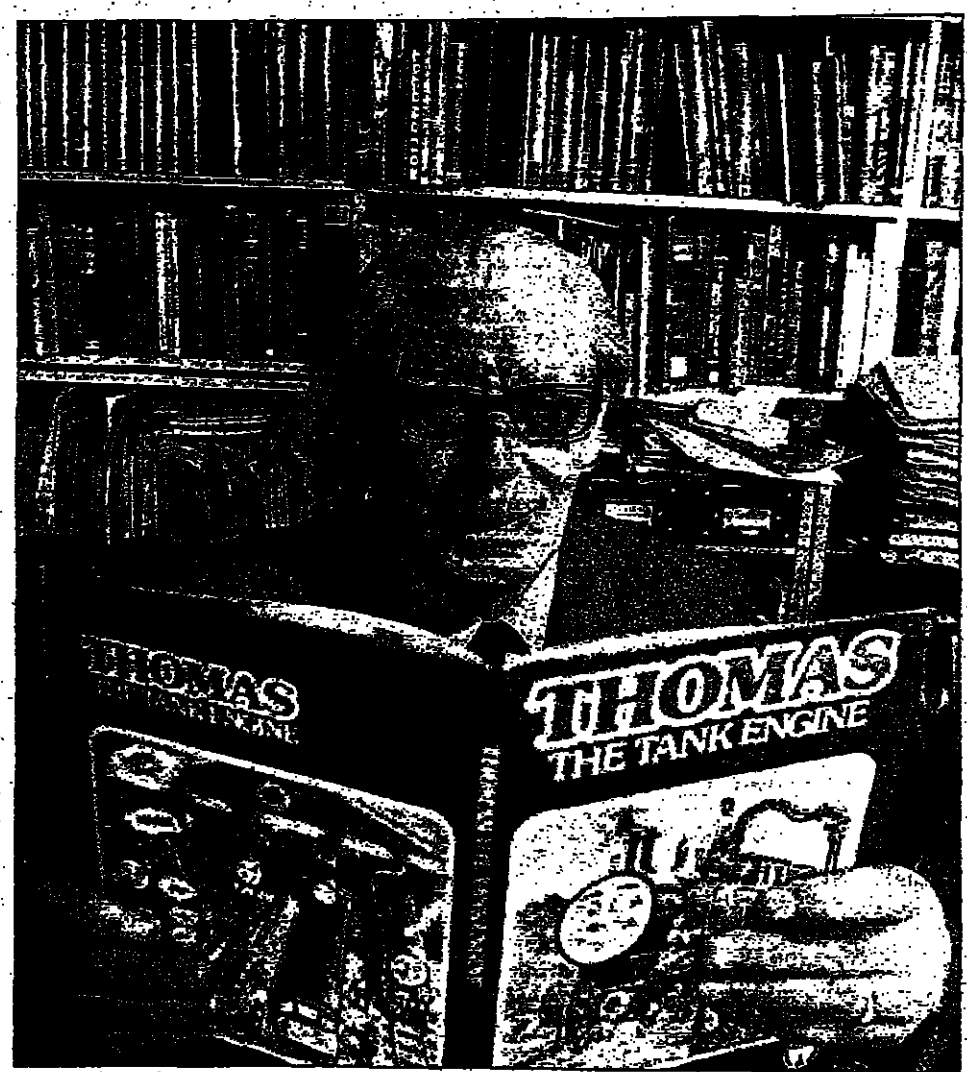
It was with *James the Red Engine* that he began a tempestuous, but highly creative, collaboration with the illustrator C. Reginald Dalby who - despite a wilful disregard for railway accuracy and authenticity - helped set the style of the Railway Series with his anthropomorphic engines looking so believably impish, guilty, happy, sad, smug or stuck-up as they chuffed through idealised rural settings captured with a gem-like brilliance.

Dalby also re-illustrated the unsatisfactory first volume and went on to produce several more books before handing over to John Kenney who, in turn, was succeeded by Peter and Gunvor Edwards. Each artist had a different approach, but each complimented the strong authorial voice found in the books and helped maintain the popularity of the series.

With his brother, George, Wilbert invented the setting for the stories, the Island of Sodor, situated between the British mainland and the Isle of Man. They made maps and wrote a detailed history of the island, its people and railway engines, which helped shape many of the events described in later volumes.

Wilbert also pursued his other railway interests: building ambitious model railway layouts in each of his homes, taking railway excursions at home and abroad with his brother or his friend "Teddy" Boston (the Fat Clergyman of the Railway Series) and becoming involved with the work of various railway preservation societies, such as the Talylyn Railway in Wales, which was to inspire the Skarloey Railway on the Island of Sodor, featured in such books as *Four Little Engines* (1955) and *The Little Old Engine* (1959).

Another preserved railway



Awdry: the 'Puff Puff Parson'

Photograph: Michael Charity / Camera Press

was to honour Awdry when, in 1987, the Dean Forest Railway named one of its engines *Wilbert*. On an icy winter's morning on which it was announced that Wilbert Awdry had been honoured in the 1996 New Year's Honours List, I travelled on the footplate of *Wilbert* and was able to report to its namesake that the Forest railwaymen had proudly added "OBE" in chalk to the nameplate.

In addition to the Railway Series, Awdry wrote two children's novels about the adventures of Belinda the Beetle, a little red, three-wheeled car, which failed to achieve the popularity of his railway-engine stories. He also co-edited and contributed to several adult books about railways.

In 1983, 11 years after Awdry wrote his last Railway Series title, his son Christopher (once the little boy for whom the original stories were told) wrote *Really Useful Engines*, the first of, to date, 13 further books about the engines of Sodor. The following year saw the premiere of the popular television series

Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends, narrated by Ringo Starr.

This revival of interest in Thomas catapulted the shy Wilbert Awdry reluctantly into the limelight: journalists sought him out and pestered him with questions about the writing of the books, and how much money they had earned him. Speculation about the reasons for his modest life were not satisfied even by the surprising revelation that he had received only relatively small royalties. That he was a man of simple tastes who was unconcerned by the way in which the world rated success was seemingly beyond the comprehension of most people outside his family and friends.

Margaret Awdry died in 1989, the year after she and Wilbert celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. His own health began to decline and osteoporosis gave him increasing discomfort. In consequence he was unable to enjoy many of the celebrations in 1995, the year which marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Three Railway Engines*. An

exhibition was staged at the National Railway Museum in York and a mainline engine - ironically an InterCity 125 - running on the East Coast line between London and Glasgow, was named *The Reverend W. Awdry*. I asked Awdry once how he hoped he would be remembered. He smiled and replied: "I should like my epitaph to say, 'He helped people see God in the ordinary things of life', and he made children laugh."

Brian Sibley

Wilbert Vere Awdry, priest and writer: born Ampfield, Hampshire 15 June 1911; ordained deacon 1936; priest 1937; curate, Odham, Hampshire 1936-38; West Lavington, Wiltshire 1938-40; King's Norton, Birmingham 1940-45; Rector, Elsworth with Knapwell, Cambridgeshire 1946-53; Rural Dean, Bournemouth, Cambridgeshire 1953-63; OBE 1996; married 1938 Margaret Hale (died 1989; one son, two daughters); died Stroud, Gloucestershire 21 March 1997.

BIRTHS

THOROUGHGOOD: On 15 March, at the Portland Hospital, to Abdul (nee Weekes) and John, a son, Jonathan Austin William.

DEATHS

MJEN: On 15 March in his 100th year, Joseph Stanley, of Ovingham, Northumberland, architect and town and country planner, Professor Emeritus of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Widow of Mary Aubrey Pugh and Evelyn Meryl Waite, dear father of Elizabeth Jane and Aubrey Paul and a loved grandfather to his nine grandchildren. Funeral service at St Mary's Church, Ovingham on Wednesday 20 March at 11.30 followed by cremation at Newcastle Crematorium at 12.30pm. Family flowers only. Donation in lieu if desired to Amnesty International.

FIGGESS: Sir John, KBE CMG, peacefully on 20 March at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, aged 87. Dearest loved husband of Aletia, father of Sandra and Mike, grandfather of Alex, Nina and Charlie. Private funeral. No memorial service as wished. Family flowers only. Any donations to The Children's Society, Edward Rudolph House, Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL.

BILL: Robert on 18 March 1997, aged 84, peacefully at home after a long fight with cancer and heart disease. Much loved husband to Margaret and dear father to Jane, Maggie and Douglas. Funeral 10-15am Thursday 27 March 1997 Warfield Church, Bracknell, Berkshire. No flowers please. Donations to Imperial Cancer Research Fund/British Heart Foundation.

MILLER: Clare, much-loved wife and

Births, Marriages & Deaths

trend to Douglas, dearly loved mother of Keith, Ian and Karen, and to Thomas and Emily, and grandmother to Lauren, died suddenly but peacefully in her sleep on 18 March. Funeral service at Randall's Park Crematorium, Leatherhead at 2pm 27 March. Enquiries and flowers to Walter C. Worrell, telephone 01932 343143.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax 0171-293 2810.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr L. F. Earle and Miss M. C. Arnold. The engagement is announced between Laurence, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Earle, of London, and Maria, daughter of Mrs Lisa Arnold, of London, and Mr Robert Arnold, of Lyford Cay, Bahamas.

Mr T. M. Sutton and Miss J. R. Dickie. The engagement is announced between Martin, youngest son of the late Dr L.E. Sutton FRCS and Mrs R.A. Sutton, of Headington, Oxford, and Jo, daughter of Mr and Mrs W.S. Dickie, of Swindon, Wiltshire.

Birthdays

TODAY: Lord Alport, Deputy Speaker, House of Lords, 85; Mr George Benson, singer and jazz guitarist, 54; Miss Sheila Cameron QC, Vice-Chancellor of the Province of Canterbury, 63; Mr Brian Hanrahan, broadcaster, 48; The Very Rev. Lowry Jackson, Provost Emeritus of London, 66; Professor Sir Arnold Turner, President, Royal College of Physicians, 63; Professor David Watson, director, University of Brighton, 48.

TOMORROW: Professor Harry Allen, Emeritus Professor of American Studies, University of East Anglia, 82; Mr Mike Atherton, cricketer, 29; Sir Roger Banister, former Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, 68; Mr Alan Beardslee, playwright, 51; Mr

Geoffrey Bush, composer, 77; Mr Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, 44; Mr Barry Cope, writer and comedian, 62; Professor Patrick Dowling, Vice-Chancellor, Surrey University, 58; Mr Professor Kenneth Gregory, Warley, Goldsmith's College, London, 59; Mr Alan Kinnear, film director, 57; Sir David McVie, former Commissioner, the Metropolitan Police, 72; Mr Michael Manser, architect, 68; Mr Andrew Miller MP, 48; Mr Andrew Mitchell MP, 41; Mr Alfred Morris MP, 69; Mr Michael Nym, composer, 53; Sir Desmond Plummer, chairman, United Utilities, 62; Mr Oliver Sherwood, racehorse trainer, 42; Sir Ian Todd, consulting surgeon, 76; Sir Edward Warner, former diplomat, 86; Sir Denis Wright, former diplomat, 86.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS. Prince Edward today visits Cakarta, and tomorrow visits Medan.

Changing of the Guard. TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, Horse Guards, Campden Square. Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, and provides the State Guard. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

Due to pressure on space, today's BIRTH & REASON column has been held over. Our series for Holy Week, 'Arguments for Easter', starts on Monday.

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business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY DEPUTY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

SFO triumphs as Michael Ward gets two-year jail term

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

The Serious Fraud Office gained an unprecedented victory yesterday, securing custodial sentences in the court of appeal for a pair of convicted fraudsters who two years ago had escaped with "too lenient" fines and community service for their part in an illegal share support conspiracy. It will be the second spell in jail in under two years for Michael Ward, former chief

executive of Dublin-quoted European Leisure, the company whose shares he conspired to ramp during a successful bid for rival Midsummer Leisure in 1991. He was jailed in September 1995 for one year on a related charge of making false and misleading statements during the SFO's investigation of the share support operation.

Michael Ward, 49, the former Morgan Grenfell and Warburgs banker who lives in Mayfair's plush Chester Square, was sentenced yesterday to two years in jail while his former deputy chairman, Jeremy Howarth, received a 20-month sentence.

Two years ago the two escaped with fines of £63,000 and £151,000 respectively and 220 hours of community service. A third co-defendant, George Hendry, who received a conditional discharge in 1995, was given a 12-month sentence, suspended for two years, on the grounds of ill-health. The original fraud revolved

around Mr Ward's attempts artificially to inflate the value of European Leisure's shares to ensure the success of a bid for Midsummer Leisure. In its case, the SFO painted a picture of an elaborate share-support scheme which involved a Jersey tax-driver, a Scottish contracting firm and a company controlled by an Egyptian business associate of Ward.

After the fraud came to light, and knowing that he would be interviewed by the SFO, Ward recruited an associate, Brook Anderson, to give him a bogus receipt concerning the sale of furniture for £89,000 to explain movements of cash through his accounts. The forgery of that document prompted the second case in late 1995 that led to his previous jail sentence.

Yesterday, Lord Justice McCowan, sitting with Mr Justice Jowitt and Mr Justice Hooper, ruled the original fraud sentences were "unduly lenient". In addition to the jail sentences, Ward and Howarth were each banned from becoming company directors for seven and five years respectively.

Giving the decision, Lord Justice McCowan said, "We grant leave as we consider the sentences imposed were unduly lenient." "The scheme was masterminded by Ward. The companies involved were international companies trading on the London Stock Exchange. The fraud involved careful planning and

substantial dishonesty. An important element in sentencing must be the deterrent element. "It is important that people carrying out something like this, should know they face a real chance of going to prison." The two were given 48 hours to put their affairs in order before starting their sentences. Charismatic and eloquent, Ward enjoyed a brief period as the darling of the Irish Stock Exchange after in 1987 he acquired the Edenderry Shoe Company as a shell for his ambitions in the leisure sector. He built up a chain of nightclubs in Spain and Paris and he owned the famous Hippodrome in London. Ward's nemesis, however, was the takeover in 1991 of Midsummer Leisure, a company then valued at £87m. To secure control of Midsummer, Ward had to maintain the value of European Leisure's shares and to do that he masterminded illegal share purchases with a combined value of £400,000, the SFO believed.

Tesco in record £640m Irish supermarket deal

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Tesco made its largest ever acquisition yesterday when it paid £640m for the Irish supermarket businesses of Associated British Foods. It is one of the largest deals in Irish corporate history and makes Tesco the number one supermarket retailer in both Northern and Southern Ireland.

The move immediately sparked talk on whether Tesco had paid too much. It also fuelled speculation over how Associated British Foods might spend its burgeoning cash pile which will reach £1.5bn following the deal's completion.

Garry Weston, ABF's chairman dismissed suggestions that he might be interested in acquiring Hillsdown Holdings, the Typhoo Tea and Hartley's jam group. He said: "We have been trying to get out of those kind of businesses for 15 years."

However, he did not rule out interest in National Starch, part of the speciality chemical business recently put up for sale by Unilever, or an acquisition in the Polish sugar industry, currently in the process of being privatised.

He declared himself satisfied with the sale: "We felt the business had a better future with

them [Tesco], than with us. These sort of businesses sometimes get to a certain size then they need more clout. They will have that." He added that the gradual invasion of the Irish market by Tesco and Sainsbury would have made it harder to increase profits.

The deal, which includes a £10m dividend to ABF, eclipses Tesco's previous record deal, the £250m paid for the Scottish chain William Low in 1994. It means Tesco will leapfrog Sainsbury's in Northern Ireland where it has been opening new stores.

Tesco already has one Tesco Metro in Belfast and planning applications in for two superstores. This deal gives Tesco a further 109 supermarkets under the Quinnsworth, Stewarts and Crazy Prices names. It also includes 79 Wine Barrel off licences and 47 sports shops trading as Lifestyle Sports and Leisure as well as a pork processing and a packaging business.

Tesco's chairman, Lord MacLaurin, said: "We believe Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are attractive

markets where Tesco can bring its extensive retail expertise to bear."

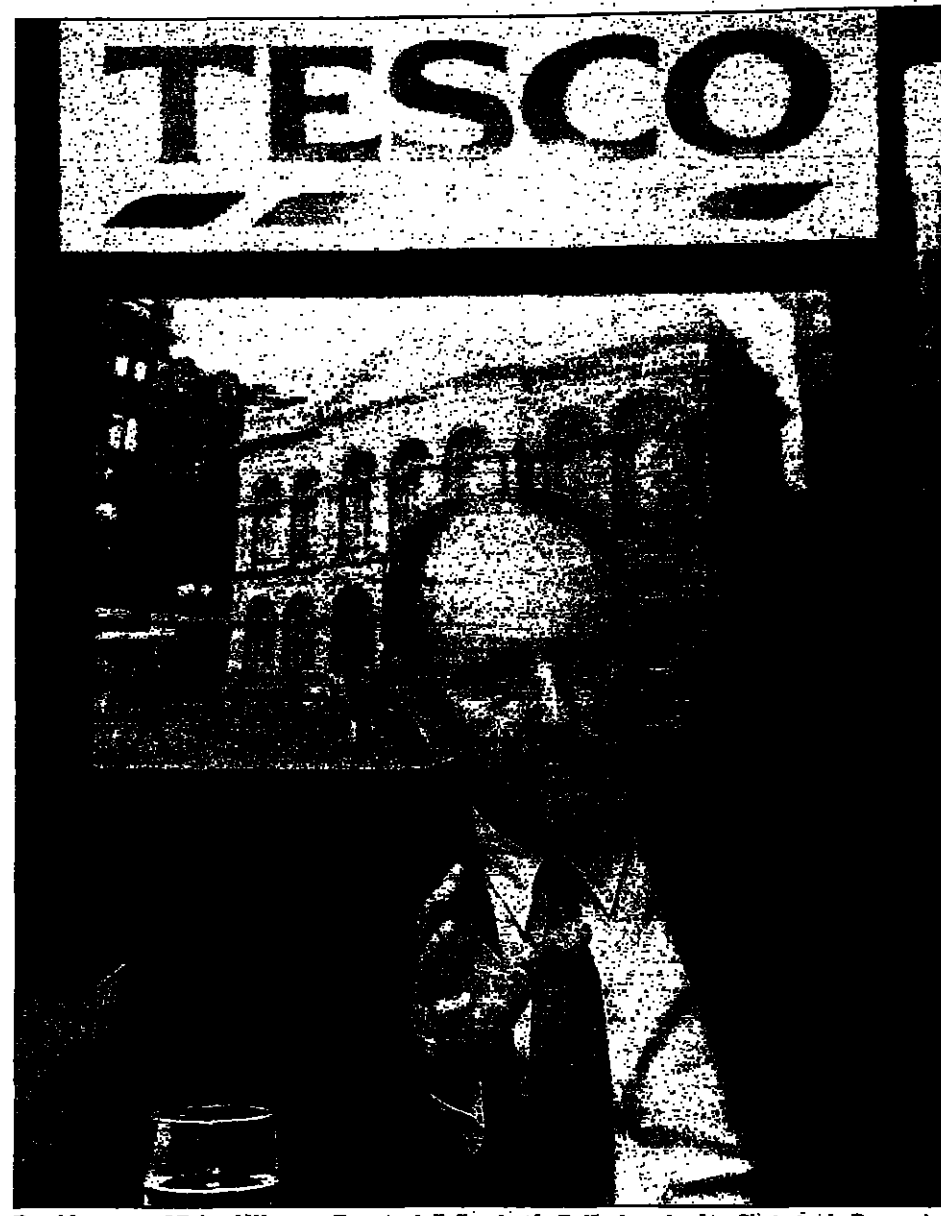
Tesco will hope this deal proves more successful than its last in Ireland. It acquired a chain of supermarkets in southern Ireland in the late 1970s and changed the name to Tesco. The move caused antagonism locally and Tesco later sold them. Tesco said that it would be more sensitive this time and would trade the businesses under their existing formats.

It also sent executives that included Michael Wemms, retail director, and Terry Leamy, chief executive, to Belfast and Dublin to break the news. It said there were no plans for redundancies and that the group's head office in Eire would be retained.

"We won't be steamrolling in with the Tesco name," Lord MacLaurin said. Tesco hopes to improve the Irish operations' margins from their current 4.7 per cent to 6 per cent within three years by increasing sales, particularly of own label lines, better buying power and the introduction of Tesco's loyalty card later this year.

Analysis said the deal was a full price. "I think it will be very challenging and if Sainsbury takes over Wellworth [the Northern Irish chain] then Stewarts could come under pressure," said Mike Dennis of NatWest Securities.

What Tesco gets for its £640m			
Republic of Ireland (75 stores)		Northern Ireland (34 stores)	
Quinnsworth	57	Stewarts	19
Crazy Prices	18	Crazy Prices	9
		Superdeal	2
Sales: £850m		Westside	3
Market share: 19.4%		Bloomfields	1
		Sales: £380m	
		Market share: 17.5%	
Also included: 79 Wine Barrel off-licences, 47 Lifestyle sports & leisure shops, Kingsway Fresh foods (pork processing) and Dailywrap Produce (packaging).			
Total sales: £1.24bn Profits: £58m			



Breaking news: Michael Wemms, Tesco retail director, in Belfast yesterday. Photograph: Pacemaker

Limelight to axe jobs after shares fall

Tom Stevenson

Limelight, the Moven kitchens to Dolphin bathrooms group whose shares have fallen to little more than half the price at which they floated in November, is to cut more than 100 jobs in response to a slump in sales since the start of the year.

The redundancies are part of a bid to placate shareholders, who have seen their investment collapse just months after founder Stephen Boler netted £60m from the flotation. Limelight also spent out a list of management actions to put the company back on track.

Speaking after the company announced increased profits for the year to December, Ashley Lewis, finance director, said there was no question of either Cazenove, Limelight's broker, or its sponsor, NM Rothschild, resigning over the affair. The collapse of the share price, from a peak of 200p shortly after a placing at 175p to yesterday's 94.5p, comes as a serious embarrassment to the two blue-chip firms.

Mr Lewis said sales had dropped dramatically in January after buoyant sales in the run-up to Christmas. He could think of no substantive reason for the fall-off in demand, except that potential windfalls from a raft of building society flotations had locked up the money that might otherwise have been spent on big ticket items such as fitted kitchens, bathrooms and conservatories.

In the year to December Limelight bounced back into the black, reporting pre-tax profits of £2.84m compared with a £1m loss in 1995. The profit was struck from sales of £171.6m, up from £133.5m the previous year. As projected at the time of flotation, there was no dividend.

Mr Lewis said Limelight was investigating outsourcing various internal functions such as warehousing and distribution in order to cut costs. He said the company was also planning to sell other new but related products through its showrooms including kitchen stools, towels and rattan furniture, and to contract manufacture for an unnamed national distributor.

Howden agrees £385m bid from Charter

Magnus Grimond

Howden, one of the oldest names in the Scottish engineering industry, yesterday ended a week of speculation by agreeing a £385m bid from Charter, the welding rods to rail ties group. The bid sent the Renfrew-based group's shares soaring yesterday, leaving them 36.5p higher at 128p, around 3p lower than the offer terms of £124.75 in cash and three Charter shares for every 115 in Howden. Charter's shares were also rising, 60p to 847.5p.

The deal comes just five days after a jump in the share price prompted Howden to issue a statement that it had not received any approaches. Charter made its first contact on Monday afternoon, but did not tie up the deal until Thursday night. Both the company and the Takeover Panel, which was kept informed, said yesterday they were satisfied that all the rules had been followed.

John Jackson, the chairman, did not rule out the possibility of a higher offer, but Charter, which has been stalking Howden for six months, was confident yesterday that its offer would prove a knock-out. Jeff Herbert, the chairman and chief

executive, said this was an attractive offer for Howden's shareholders, while the deal would be earnings enhancing for Charter in its first full year.

The group has been looking to add a third leg to the business for at least a year in the wake of the successful £280m purchase in 1994 of Esab, the Swedish company which leads the world in welding consumables. Last June's sale of a majority stake in Cape, the building materials company, left Charter with net cash of £36.5m at the end of December. Mr Herbert said Howden's core business of building fans for uses ranging from mine ventilation to air conditioning in battle tanks "fitted like a glove" to its acquisition criteria. There were "exciting opportunities" for growth. It was rare to find a case like this where a market leader earned lower margins than its rivals, he claimed.

He said they would review the other Howden businesses, which range from equipment used in digging the Channel Tunnel to pasta-making extrusion machinery.

On Tuesday, Charter announced profits had slumped from £97.5m to £46m last year.

Union may urge strike over Steel cuts

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British Steel employees may be urged to take industrial action over plans by the company to transform working practices and accelerate the programme of job cuts, the steel workers' union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) warned yesterday.

Keith Brookman, ISTC general secretary, met British Steel's personnel director, Alan Johnston, in London to hear details of the group's five-year plan to introduce team working and reduce layers of management.

He also disclosed it would cost £30m a year to implement, costing British Steel £150m for the five-year programme.

No figures for job losses were mentioned though Mr Brookman said British Steel would "have to recoup that money from somewhere".

He added: "If an employer takes advantage of the workforce there's always the possibility of industrial action... it's essential that there must not be any compulsory redundancies."

Mr Johnston said reports of 10,000 job losses over five years, double the current envisaged rate by the group,

were "pure speculation". However, he said about 10 per cent of the workforce was of "pensionable age" and repeated that the 20 per cent surge in the value of the pound last year had damaged British Steel's competitiveness, though this was only one factor in the changes.

He again refused to rule out compulsory job cuts and denied the move was a knee-jerk reaction to the rise in sterling. "We didn't speak about jobs in the meeting. We were talking about a new plan for a jobs package... There's no new five-year plan we've discussed with the troops. It's a budget

plan for one year," Mr Johnston said.

Last year British Steel was squeezed by the rise in the pound against the German mark and a drop in steel prices of as much as 30 per cent on world markets. The company's profits are forecast to more than halve from £1.1bn in the year to March 1996 to below £500m this year and could drop further to £250m in 1997-98. Every 10 per cent increase in the value of the pound knocks £100m off British Steel's profits.

It emerged yesterday that Sir Brian Moffat, British Steel chairman, briefed unions on the

problem last month, shortly before officials received a private letter from him warning of the likelihood of job losses. He told them: "Our profits in January this year were significantly lower than January a year ago and yet this year we made more steel." The group is Europe's largest steel producer and the world's third biggest.

The ISTC said no decisions on industrial action would be taken before a long period of consultation with the workforce. Mr Brookman insisted relations with management remained good, despite the jobs warning.

Siemens steps in for Parsons rescue

Chris Godsmark

The long-term future of Parsons steam turbines, one of the most famous names in British engineering, has been secured after Siemens, the German industrial giant, won the bidding to buy the historic Tyneside company from its owner, Rolls-Royce.

Siemens, which beat off competition from General Electric of the US, is understood to have agreed to pay between £25m and £30m for Parsons, which makes large turbine used to generate electricity in power stations. Negotiations with Rolls-Royce's advisers, Morgan Stanley, were due to have

been concluded before the group's annual profits announcement on 6 March, but became bogged down over contractual terms. However these stumbling blocks have been overcome and Siemens is expected to announce the purchase within the next fortnight.

The axe has been hanging over Parsons since last July, when Rolls-Royce revealed plans to sell the works and make provisions of £248m, partly to cover a possible 1,700 redundancies. In 1989 Rolls-Royce had paid £304m for Parsons' parent group, North Engineering Industries, but was hit by intense competition

from larger rivals. A further 800 jobs were also threatened at another industrial power subsidiary in Derby.

Closure of Parsons would have ended a manufacturing tradition stretching back to 1889 when Sir Charles Parsons, inventor of the steam turbine, created the company. Parsons made the turbines used to power the ill-fated Titanic, a succession of warships and, at its height in the 1960s employed 12,000 people.

Last night Siemens declined to comment. However, in a further boost Siemens is thought to be planning to continue turbine production at Parsons,

which is a short distance from the German company's new £1bn micro-chip plant at Walsall. Analysts had speculated a buyer would use Parsons' expertise in international contracting and consultancy, but would end turbine-making itself.

Unions will be pressing Siemens to give a commitment to preserve job numbers at Parsons, which have dropped by almost 400 since the sale announcement. The local management are considering whether to make another 80 staff redundant, though no decisions have been taken on other 400 potential job cuts.

Newcastle shoots to top of range

Patrick Toole

Newcastle United yesterday defied its critics by pricing a controversial £47.7m share issue at the top end of the range, valuing the Premier League club at £193m when dealings began on 2 April.

The news came as shares in Charlton Athletic of the First Division collapsed on their first day of trading, heightening fears that the market for football stocks had overheated.

"There are still a lot of institutions out there who are nervous about football," said Paul Deakin of NatWest Markets, Newcastle's sponsoring broker and financial adviser.

But strong demand from Newcastle fans for shares at 135p ensured its retail offer was oversubscribed seven times. To satisfy demand from 8,500 season ticket holders the number of shares available to private investors will be increased from 10 per cent of the offer, or 4 million shares, to 15 per cent.

NatWest indicated that the institutional offer, which closed yesterday, was also substantially oversubscribed. "Our list of top 10 investors reads like a Who's Who of financial institutions in the UK," said Mr Deakin.

However, he admitted some fund managers had shunned the issue because of concerns that some football clubs had become

overvalued. These fears were realised yesterday when shares in Charlton Athletic closed at 17p below their issue price at 63p after touching 50p in early dealings. Existing shareholders, season ticket holders and supporters snapped up around 1.3 million shares priced at 76p. Charlton's institutions placing was also fully subscribed at 80p per share, valuing the club at £17m. "It is disappointing," said Ken Ford of Weather & Greenwood, the club's advisers. "But there are buyers out there and we are hopeful of getting back to the issue price before too long."

Shares in other recently floated clubs, including Birmingham City and Sunderland, are also trading at or below their offer price.

Proceeds from the Newcastle float will be used to pay off debts of £22m. The club plans to abandon its St James' Park home for a £20m stadium across the city.

STOCK MARKETS

FTSE 100

Day	Index
F	4400
S	4440
M	4320
T	4280
W	4240
T	4200

Dow Jones*

Day	Index
F	7200
S	7250
M	7150
T	7100
W	7050
T	7000

Nikkei

Day	Index
F	19200
S	19600
M	19400
T	19200
W	19000
T	18800

*The Jones graph at 1200 hrs

FTSE 100 Index Ltd.

Indices

Index	Close	Day's Change	Change%	1986/87 High	1986/87 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4258.10	-74.10	-1.7	4444.30	3632.30	3.79
FTSE 250	4568.20	-87.70	-1.9	4729.40	4015.30	2.48
FTSE 100-250	2108.70	-37.40	-1.7	2194.30	1816.80	3.72
FTSE SmallCap	3321.50	-21.80	-0.9	2374.20	1954.06	2.96
FTSE All-Share	2079.85	-35.55	-1.7	2163.94	1791.95	3.65
New York*	6870.25	-57.40	-0.8	7085.16	5032.94	1.95
Tokyo	closed			22666.90	17303.65	0.891
Hong Kong	12472.33	-179.09	-1.4	13668.24	10204.87	3.371
Frankfurt	3264.67	-81.26	-1.5	3460.64	2253.36	1.521

Statistics as of 21 March



MICHAEL HARRISON

'We can agree on what constitutes a privatised company. But what is a utility? Water, gas and electricity yes. But what about telephones, airports and railway tracks?'

We're still guessing who'll pay the windfall tax

Gordon Brown has been at it again this week, talking about his windfall tax and who will pay it. Also, the more he explains, the less clear it becomes. He injects clarity only to make things more opaque. Where there is certainty, he sows confusion.

Perhaps that is part of the strategy. Keep 'em guessing until the ink is dry on Labour's first Finance Bill. Perhaps it is because the Shadow Chancellor does not want to give any hostages to fortune. Perhaps it is because even now, three years after it first mooted the idea, Labour is still tied up in knots drafting a watertight legal definition of how the tax will be applied.

Whatever the answer, Mr Brown was on his best and most elusive form as the election campaign proper kicked off. On Tuesday, he finally appeared to nail his colours to the mast at Labour's first election press briefing. He announced that the tax would affect privatised companies that are licensed and regulated by statute. That would seem to cast the net pretty wide.

Unfortunately, the Shadow Chancellor then went on to qualify his remarks. The tax, he added helpfully, would apply "only to those privatised utilities that were sold off at an under-valuation and have had tax regulatory regimes".

The problem, as the privatised companies themselves have discovered, is that every attempt to define more precisely who is in

and who is out merely adds to the confusion. As the current Chancellor, Ken Clarke, observed, Mr Brown was playing "an absurd guessing game, giving journalists a clue and daring them to work out the answer".

Thus the *Guardian* confidently asserted that Mr Brown's latest definition would exempt both British Telecom and British Gas. This newspaper and the *Financial Times* asserted, on the other hand, that both were now directly in the firing line, along with the Recs and the water companies. The one area of general agreement appears to be that Associated British Ports is off the hook. Nice to know if you are ABP but not much help to anyone else, considering that enough energy has been expended on the subject to power a small town.

It is worth unpicking Mr Brown's words one by one, because in the space of a single simple phrase he can pack enough ambiguity to keep a lawyer in fees for a lifetime. We can agree on what constitutes a privatised company. But what is a utility? Water, gas and electricity yes. But what about telephones, airports and railway tracks? BAA has a monopoly on airports in the South-east and is price-regulated by statute, but it will dispatch a 3,000 word document setting the record straight if you dare suggest it is also a utility.

BT and British Gas may exhibit many of the characteristics of monopolies. But in cer-

tain parts of their business, they face intense competition. In others, stringent regulation, BG says, Clare Sportswear's latest price controls would rob it off £850m - more than its annual profits - and force it to make half the workforce redundant. On the face of it that does not sound like tax regulation.

The question of who qualifies is, then, tricky enough. Deciding how much they should pay is even more arbitrary. Mr Brown says it will be restricted to those utilities that were "under-valued" at flotation. But he also says it will only apply to that element of profits which are "excess". Most companies fall into the former category but not all fit the latter. If excess profits are measured by the extent to which total shareholder returns in these companies have outstripped the market average, then BT and BG will not pay a penny.

If the tax is based on straight market capitalisation, they will be the two most heavily penalised companies. However, research published recently by Simon Flowers, utilities analyst at NatWest Markets, suggests that even using the market capitalisation approach can produce wildly varying results. In three of the five scenarios he examines, BT pays nothing.

Interestingly, however, all of them assume that the two generators, National Power and PowerGen, are clothed even though they are not monopolies, are not

price-regulated and, on some definitions, are not even utilities.

The one certainty is that Labour will levy the tax - how else will it raise the £3bn needed for its employment programme? And the safest bet is to assume it will be spread as widely as possible to cushion the impact on individual companies.

Beyond that, the conjecture is as idle as guessing at the scale of Labour's victory on 1 May. Tony Blair will work with whatever majority he gets. The utilities will have to live with whatever tax he levies, however unfair and arbitrary.

Could Toyota and the French get on?

What do you get when you cross Europe's most chauvinistic nation with Japan's most conservative car company? Answer: a £1bn Toyota factory in Lens, northern France. If you find all this just a touch unbelievable, then you are not alone.

The only thing the French and the Japanese car industry have in common is their animosity. It is not so long ago that the chairman of Peugeot, Jacques Calvet, described Britain as a Japanese aircraft carrier floating off the coast of Europe, a reference to the fact that we had become home to its three biggest car-makers. For

good measure he also referred to the UK as the fifth island of Japan.

Strong words but scarcely surprising from a nation which insisted that all Japanese video recorders came in through the obscure inland port of Poitiers and all Nissans from Sunderland were Japanese.

It is just conceivable that the French have learnt their lesson. While the arrival of Japanese manufacturing techniques has helped revolutionise the British motor industry, France has slipped down the league, as Renault's current difficulties demonstrate.

But has Toyota been persuaded to switch its investment strategy so fundamentally? It looked long and hard at Britain before deciding to invest £1bn at its Burnaston plant. For that it got a site which, in configuration, mirrors its plant in Kentucky where Toyota turns out 400,000 cars a year.

Even at 200,000 cars a year, Burnaston will only just be an economic proposition. Why spend another £1bn and employ an extra 3,000 to build a similar sized plant on the other side of the Channel? More to the point, why pay French wage rates and social costs when Britain is so much cheaper.

The Japanese may not like our coolness towards a single currency but there are plenty of other compensations, starting with the language and the golf courses. Burnaston should not throw in the towel just yet.

Dow Jones vows to fight £139m libel damages

David Osborne
New York

The Dow Jones Company, publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*, is vowing to fight back after being slapped with record-breaking libel damages of \$222.7m (£139m) arising from an article about a now-defunct Texas bond firm.

A jury in Dallas made the award to the former owners and employees of MMAR Group of Houston. MMAR went out of business shortly after publication of the 1993 article that sarcastically dubbed the firm "Make Money And Run".

Upheld, the damages could radically reduce the leeway allowed to financial journalists in the US in corporate reporting. It would also badly hurt the Dow Jones company, which is already facing unrest among members of its founding family because of a disappointing share price performance.

There remains a high probability, however, that the pub-

lisher will be able to have the damages significantly reduced and even thrown out of court. Historically, appeals against damage awards of this kind tend to be successful.

"No journalistic organisation, no matter how wealthy, can survive judgments like this," remarked Floyd Brown, a freedom-of-speech lawyer in New York. "The numbers are so stratospheric that, if they were to be sustained, they would lead to a sea-change in the behaviour of all journalists."

The jury set \$200m in punitive damages against the publisher and added another \$22.7m in compensation. It also ordered the journalist, Laura Jerski, to pay \$20,000. The damages amount to more than five times the previous record award of \$45m.

Dow Jones pledged to appeal the verdict. "We were chronicling the difficulties of this company; we did not cause them," remarked the *Journal's* managing editor, Paul Steiger.

Jim George, the lawyer for Dow Jones, added: "Obviously we are disappointed. The punitive damages are completely unfounded. I don't believe they can be supported as a matter of law. There's no evidence the reporter or the *Wall Street Journal* had any doubts about the truth of the story."

The article implied that MMAR had been reckless in its mortgage-backed securities business and was under investigation by US regulators. It said that MMAR mispriced securities to disguise a loss of \$50m in dealings for the Louisiana state pension fund. It also described MMAR owners spending \$8,000 in one night entertaining Japanese brokers in a topless bar.

Texas is renowned for awarding extravagant libel damages. The jury may have been moved by the subsequent fate of MMAR, which was forced to close with the loss of 94 jobs. The award also highlights the deep disdain in which journal-

ists are held by the American public in general.

Recent months have seen two libel suits succeeding against the ABC television network, one resulting in \$10m damages awarded to a Florida doctor, and another in \$5.5m for a supermarket chain.

The previous libel damages record was in a case against AH Belo of Texas which was hit with \$58m in damages. That case was later settled out of court, however, for an undisclosed amount.

The award has come at a delicate time for Dow Jones, which is already battling bad publicity over the dissatisfaction of its shareholders. Dow Jones has been unable to give momentum to its share price in part because of the disappointing performance of its troubled financial information service, *Telerate*.

Unconfirmed rumours surfaced last month that Reuters was considering investing in Dow Jones, perhaps with a view eventually to taking it over.

Wace in red as chairman quits

Patrick Toohy

Wace, the specialist printing and imaging group, yesterday reported its second loss in four years and said Fran ten Bos was quitting as chairman.

The £2m loss follows three profit warnings last year which saw Wace's share price collapse from a peak of 77p to 57p. Last night the shares closed unchanged at 91.5p, valuing the company at £72m.

Analysts said the results were in line with a warning from chief executive Trevor Grice in October that the costs of a big restructuring programme would plunge Wace into the red.

Wace, which made profits of £20.5m in 1995, took an exceptional charge of £13.9m last year to cover the cost of printing paper-based commodity pricing to focus on higher-margin electronic publishing and digital media.

A commercial print plant in Glasgow was shut, imaging activities in Paris and Chicago have both been moved on to fewer sites and printing busi-

nesses in Holland and America are up for sale.

"The only thing I've done at Wace is to make it smaller," said Mr Grice, who became chief executive in 1993. "Now for the first time I feel comfortable talking about growth and margins."

But concerns about a sudden downturn in the US imaging market caused analysts to lower their forecasts.

Louise Barton at Henderson Crosthwaite said her profit forecast would be cut from £13m to between £5m and £10m. "I think Mr Grice has learned some lessons but the damage in the US has already been done," she said.

Wace said Mr ten Bos, a former Scottish rugby international, had "expressed a wish to step down but will continue in office until a new chairman is found." He has been chairman of Wace for seven years.

A Department of Trade and Industry inquiry continues into allegations of insider dealing and money laundering against Wace under Mr Grice's predecessor, John Clegg.

IN BRIEF

- Pearl Assurance yesterday joined the growing clamour from insurance companies for changes to the way redress is offered to victims of the pension transfer scandal, by proposing an alternative to existing guidance from the regulator. The insurer is proposing that, instead of calculating in detail how much compensation should be paid, policyholders should receive a "rough-and-ready" top-up to their schemes. This would run alongside a guarantee that any shortfall would be made up at retirement.
- Pearl's option follows Legal & General, which has proposed that companies be allowed to guarantee to match company scheme benefits at retirement, rather than pay redress immediately. However, the Personal Investment Authority, the financial regulator tasked with ensuring swift redress, is against this proposal.
- Surveyors and valuers are under growing pressure not to block house purchases by undervaluing the property, according to David Jenkins of the Centre for Research into the Built Environment at University of Glamorgan. In 70 per cent of cases the valuation is identical to the price of the transaction. Surveyors are under extra pressure not to block a sale by undervaluing property when prices are rising, and when lenders also own the estate agents handling the sale. He recommends surveyors should not be told the price which borrowers are proposing to pay.
- Frost Group, the UK's largest independent petrol retailer, made another attack on Esso for launching a petrol price war last year. Frost announced a 31.4 per cent fall in profits before exceptional items last year to £10.4m, but said its policy of refusing to join the battle and sell petrol at a loss had been proved right. Turnover fell by 5 per cent to £429.7m. The company slashed the number of franchised filling stations last year following the £83m takeover of Burnham Castro's UK petrol retailing and wholesaling business almost two years ago. Of the 907 Burnham franchises, just 200 are left. However the number of company-owned sites fell less sharply, by 30. The company's share of the UK market dropped last year from 4.7 per cent to 3 per cent.
- A new voluntary code of practice for mortgage lenders launched yesterday by the Council of Mortgage Lenders received a qualified welcome from the Consumers Association. It remains a voluntary code and will only be "brought to the attention of mortgage brokers. The code requires lenders to explain different repayment methods, rates of interest, charges and all special conditions such as repayment penalties. They should also make clear which of three levels of service they are offering: advice and recommendations, a range of information for the borrower to make an informed choice, and information on a single product only. The code promises sympathetic consideration for those in financial difficulties and sets up a complaints procedure.
- Volkswagen, the German car maker, said operating profit in 1996 surged by more than 77 per cent to around DM1.97bn (£730m), reflecting the benefits of last year's cost-cutting measures. While full details of the results will not be released until 10 April, analysts predicted that the company would finally report a operating profit of DM2bn. "The numbers show their cost-cutting plan is really taking effect," said Michael Klein, an analyst at Delbruck. Volkswagen's main cost-cutting is on the production side, where it is reducing the number of platforms used by its four car making plants from 16 to four. Analysts estimate the company could save up to 30 per cent of production costs over the next few years.
- Boustead said the Stock Exchange agreed to extend the suspension of dealings in the company's shares until 21 June. The company said the extension has been granted to allow it to investigate several acquisition opportunities, and which may lead to a reverse takeover of Boustead.

Software group chief goes

Clifford German

It was black day for departures in three company boardrooms yesterday. Anic Electronics, the communications software supplier formerly known as Cray Electronics, announced it had parted company with Jonathan Richards, chief executive.

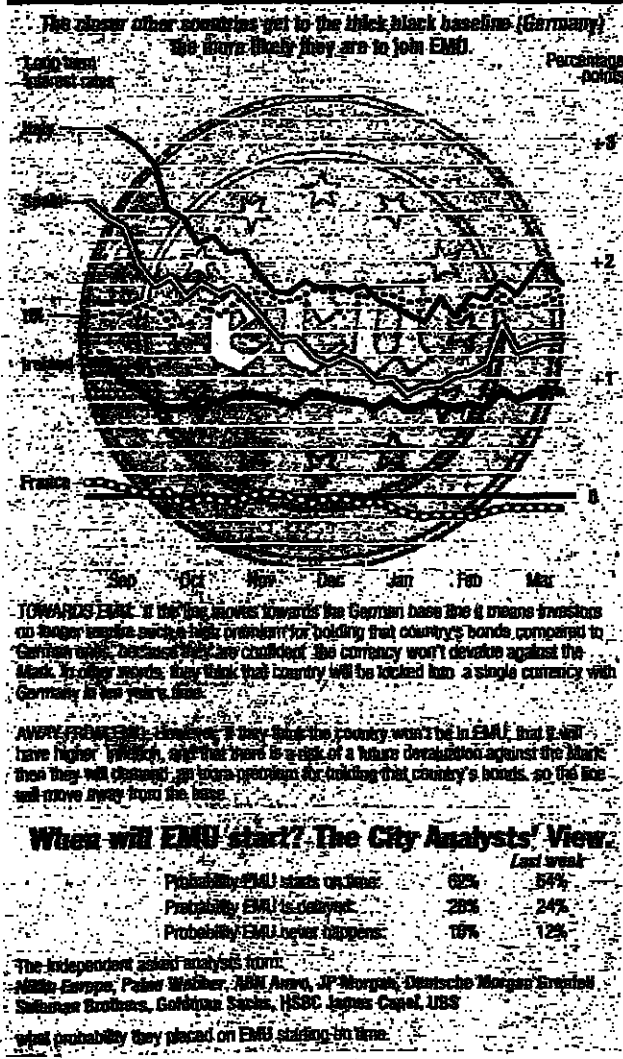
He leaves immediately with a package estimated at £500,000. He has been blamed for the problems which led to three controversial profits warnings and a £20m loss in 1995-96.

TC Group, which created the UK's largest nursing home group following the merger of Takara with Court Cavendish last year, said Hamilton Atstead, managing director, had left on "amicable terms". His receives payoff of around £400,000.

The group, to be renamed Care First, announced pre-tax profits cut from £21.8m to £17m and said it was taking an exceptional £15.3m tax charge to take account of the decision to end spending on new nursing homes.

Dick Bostock, managing director of Spandax, the Bristol-based sign-making supplier, has resigned to pursue other interests the company said yesterday.

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view



Loose talk creates a foretaste of turbulence

Politicians rather than new economic statistics were responsible for this week's turbulence in the financial markets surrounding fears of delays to European economic and monetary union.

In the middle of the week, dealers started selling Italian and Spanish bonds with abandon, and the lira reached its weakest point since it rejoined the exchange rate mechanism last November.

Robert Lind of ABN Amro said: "We had a taste of what is likely to happen if we hear a serious statement about a delay to EMU."

But the drama ebbed towards the end of the week as traders focused their attention on events in the US and the views of Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve chairman. Mr Lind said: "Had Mr Greenspan's comments not distracted the markets, the lira would have been in serious trouble."

As a result, our graph shows that the gap between Germany and Italy fell slightly compared to the end of last week, as markets calmed down again. In fact the closing gap by Friday between Italian and German bonds doesn't entirely reflect EMU concerns. According to Richard

COUNTDOWN TO EMU

649

DAYS TO GO

by
Yvette Cooper

Reid of UBS, investors are shifting out of bonds everywhere. As a result German and Italian bonds both did badly last week.

The trigger for the mid-week turbulence was a spate of candid and contradictory statements about EMU from German politicians, bankers and officials.

Martin Brookes of Goldman Sachs said: "There hasn't been any economic news to justify the reaction in the markets. Instead the markets have been reacting to sentiment. It has suddenly become acceptable in Germany and Italy to tell slightly compared to the end of last week, as markets calmed down again. In fact the closing gap by Friday between Italian and German bonds doesn't entirely reflect EMU concerns. According to Richard

Maastricht borrowing criteria, and that it was better to delay than miss the criteria. His remarks followed closely on a statement by the German Finance Minister Theo Waigel to his European colleagues on Monday, in which he reaffirmed that the criteria were more important than the timetable.

Mr Lind said: "A growing body of opinion in Germany is arguing for delay. But the debate is now being conducted in public and that is an extremely damaging thing to do, given the tightness of the markets."

In fact the economic news this week was mildly encouraging on the EMU front. A survey of German business confidence was gently optimistic, suggesting that growth will pick up later in the year.

The Standard Life Assurance Company Annual General Meeting

The 171st Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held in Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh on Tuesday 22 April 1997 at 2.30pm.

A member entitled to attend and vote is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote. A proxy need not be a member.

By order of the Board of Directors
Alan R Forbes
Secretary
Edinburgh, 20 March 1997

Policyholders may obtain a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, including the agenda, by writing to the Customer Service Information Team at PO Box 141, 1 Tanfield, Edinburgh EH3 5RG or by telephoning (0131) 245 2668. Proxy forms may be similarly obtained by members entitled to vote.

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Legal & General Investment Management

Tromans sets out with heart of oak

The world cross-country championships, which take place at Turin tomorrow, have already inspired one outstanding performance. Glynn Tromans, a 28-year-old marketing lecturer from Coventry, makes his British debut in the Italian city just 10 months after undergoing two serious heart operations.

This time last year, Tromans still thought he was an asthma sufferer. Troubled increasingly by breathlessness and sudden exhaustion, he had been advised the problem was caused by dust mites. Accordingly, he bought a special cover for his mattress, ripped the carpets up and got to work with the sander.

It was a false diagnosis. After suffering between 70 and 80 debilitating attacks, Tromans – at the prompting of the British cross-country team doctor, Frank Newton – consulted a cardiologist. He was told his problem was not asthma, but tachycardia, a condition in which extra nerve pathways in the heart cause oxygen deficiency and a racing pulse.

Tromans' career was in the balance. But he makes light now of the operations he had to undergo on 30 April and 13 May last year. "The main problem was in the 15 months or so beforehand when nobody knew what was wrong with me," Tromans said.

He had begun to train with a heart monitor in 1995, and three or four times a week he witnessed his heart rate jumping from around 145 beats a minute up to 220. "I would feel a bit of tightness in my chest," he recalled, "and two seconds later the beepers would be warning me that my pulse had leapt up. I would feel like I had just finished an 800 metres race – swimming in lactic acid and with no drive in my arms or legs."

"Once I knew I had a heart condition which could be corrected through an operation, it was just a matter of getting it done as soon as possible."

Mike Rowbottom on one runner's will to overcome his misfortune

"I think it was far more traumatic for my fiancée, Lisa, and my parents and Dave Dix, who has coached me for 12 years. He was more upset about it than I was. But I never had any second thoughts – apart from a second minute before they wheeled me off to the operating theatre."

As Tromans lay on his trolley, a nurse presented him with a form requiring his agreement.

"It was a strange experience because both operations were done under local anaesthetic"

to be fitted with a pacemaker if anything went wrong with the procedure. The chances were said to be no more than three per cent, but such an eventuality would have meant the end of his competitive career, if only because of the drugs he would have had to take to maintain the device.

"It was a strange experience," Tromans said, "because both operations were done under local anaesthetic and I could see all the TV screens and bleeping monitors. For some reason I sat up during the second operation and the nurse asked if I'd mind lying down again because I was having live wires passed through my heart."

Sensibly, he complied. So swift was his recovery that he was picked for the European Cross-country Championships last

December, only to be forced to drop out with a calf injury.

Tomorrow, three weeks to the day that he claimed the fourth automatic qualifying place in the British trials, he is due to take his career to a new level in what is only his second overseas race.

After earning his world cross place at Luton – watched by his girlfriend, parents, grandparents and dog Morris – Tromans was flown by Bob Baldaro, the Great Britain coach, to a Sunday footballer making the Premiership in his late twenties.

Tromans considers that analogy a little far-fetched, given that he has previously represented England. "I think I have always had the potential to be an international runner. But there is no question that this is a significant step up for me."

One of the more remarkable aspects of Tromans' career is the way he has performed, even while his training has been regularly disrupted. In 1995, for instance, he was placed fourth in the National Cross-country Championships, won the Inter-Counties title and finished second to Keith Cullen, the trials winner at Luton, in his England debut over 3,000m, despite suffering an attack in the warm-up.

As he looked forward to Turin, Tromans' reaction was one of embarrassment over the attention he has received at the expense of Cullen or Britain's European cross-country champion, Jon Brown. But there was no disguising his excitement. "This is very much a start for me," he said. "I am hoping to transfer all this into a summer of racing 5,000m on the track."

One troubling thought remains, however. Morris, who arrived in the Tromans household from a dog rescue society six weeks ago, has given the sanded floorboards what might be termed a distressed look. "He's scratched them to hell," Tromans said. He didn't sound too put out about it.



Glynn Tromans (No 8) earns his chance at the British trials Photograph: Mark Shearman

Hall returns to retirement after victory

Golf
ANDY FARRELL
reports from Sunningdale

Julie Hall's next appointment at Sunningdale is a site planning meeting on Monday for the Westbury Women's Open. The clubs will have to go back into the cupboard from where they came just over a month ago when Helen Wadsworth phoned her up looking for a partner for the Foursomes.

Hall, one of the last great amateur players, retired from competitive golf after her fifth Curtis Cup appearance at Killarney last June. Now secretary of the Ladies' Golf Union, she has the pick of the St Andrews' courses when time in the office drags. Instead, she spent more time over the winter playing badminton.

In their seventh match in four days, Hall was complaining of sore feet, shins and hands. Three vital interventions on the greens, however, dispatched the former European tour players Jeremy Robinson and David Jones to a 4 and 3 defeat and meant Hall and Wadsworth, the Welsh professional, became the first female partnership to win the event since Dale Reid and Corinne Dibnah in 1990.

Although under the revived handicap system, Hall and Wadsworth received eight shots from their professional opponents, they played good golf all week. In their morning semi-

final, they were one under par for 13 holes off the men's tees in beating Bedfordshire amateurs, John Kemp and Mark Wilcox, 6 and 5.

Jones had to hole his eagle putt at the first to win the first and the rest of the final never lived up to that start. All square at the turn, Hall and Wadsworth won the 10th and were handed the 12th when Robinson drove into a ditch. Hall then holed from eight feet for a half at 13, from 15 feet to go three up with four to play, and from 10 feet at the short 15th for a par.

Jones, who holed a brave six-footer on the last to beat Wayne Riley and Gary Smith in the semi-finals, then had to hole from three feet to continue the match, but left it on the right lip.

"I can't wipe the smile off my face," Hall said. "I knew I was swinging the club well when I came here, you can't lose it that quickly. The next time I play in competition, though, may not be until we defend here next year. One chap asked me this week when my season started and I said this was it."

SUNNINGDALE FOURSOMES Semi-finals: J. Robinson (the Vale) and D. Jones (Three Rivers) to G. Smith (Chesham) and W. Riley (Hemel Hempstead); H. Wadsworth (WPSN) to J. Kemp and M. Wilcox (Bedfordshire) and the final: Hall and Wadsworth to Robinson and Jones, four and three.

Lee Westwood shattered the course record with a 10-under-par 63 in the second round of the Turespaña Masters in Gran Canaria yesterday. His 63 beat the previous record by three shots.

Rusty Woods sharp enough for second

For Tiger Woods, this was one of his worst days at the office, but he still managed to finish the first round of the Bay Hill Invitational in Orlando one shot behind the leader, Paul Stankowski.

"I didn't hit it well at all, missed a lot of fairways, and wasn't sharp with my irons," said the 21-year-old Woods, who returned after a two-week break with a bogeyless, six-under-par 68. "I grinded it around and got it in the hole somehow. Those are great rounds when you don't play well but can get to the clubhouse with a good score."

Ian Woosnam led the British challenge on 70, followed by Nick Faldo (71) and Colin Montgomerie (73). Sandy Lyle shot a 75.

Stankowski, who has already won the Hawaiian Open and led last week's Honda Classic at the half-way, said his 67 was his best round of the year.

"I'm especially pleased with how I placed my iron shots. Today I was hitting it close," said Stankowski, whose only bogey came from a rare missed green.

Though there was little wind and the course was in perfect condition, scores were generally high. "It just shows you what a good test it is," said Steve Jones, the US Open champion, who is also one shot off the lead.

The course designer, Arnold Palmer, playing in his first tournament since surgery for prostate cancer, shot a nine-over par 81. "It was as solid as I've hit the ball in a couple of years. I felt very lucky just to be out there," he said.

Britain looking to raise cross-country profile

The Parco del Valentino in the centre of Turin, its surrounding roads turfed over at a reputed cost of £1m, awaits entrants from a record number of 68 countries for the 25th World Cross-Country Championships tomorrow. But one country stands alone once again, writes Mike Rowbottom.

If the image of snow had been forming in Clarke's mind, it was obviously superseded by the memory of John Ngugi charging through the white wastes of Boston in 1992 to win his fifth individual title.

That particular position has been kept in Kenya's possession since by William Siegel and Paul Terpat, who is seeking his hat-trick. Kenya's men have won every team title since 1986; they also hold the individual and team titles at junior level, while Kenya's women hold the senior and junior team titles.

The most likely challenger to the Kenyans' men's pre-eminence is Salah Hissou, the Moroccan who followed his silver medal of last year with a world 10,000 metres record of 26min 38.08sec.

But where does this leave Britain? Success at the European Cross-country Championships in December, when Jon Brown took the individual title and the women's team finished third, moving up to the above position following the disqualification of Romania, has raised the domestic profile in the sport.

The squad goes to Italy with the realistic ambition of finishing as the top European team in both senior events. To do so, the men will have to reverse the position of last year when they finished 50 points adrift of the fourth-placed Spaniards.

Brown, top individual European last year in 12th place, is set on a top 10 position this year. He beat Terpat over a muddy course in Seville in December, but cannot hope for similar conditions at an occasion which is being stage-managed by Primo Nebiolo, the president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

Keith Cullen and Andrew Pearson both look capable of a top 25 finish, which would put Britain within reach of their target. Glynn Tromans, making his British debut just 10 months after having two heart operations, is seeking a top 50 place in what is only his second race abroad.

The women are led by the top Briton in the European Championships, Hayley Haining. Lucy Elliott – currently third in the World Cross Challenge standings – and Paula Radcliffe, who has been preparing at altitude in Albuquerque.

But with nine entrants per country in the men's events, and seven for the women, this is a fearsomely tough competition. "To most people, a top 30 place sounds rubbish," Clarke said. "But to anyone who knows the sport, it is an awesome run."

Whatever the result, the event this year is likely to provide a memorable spectacle. Nebiolo has spoken hopefully of attracting 20,000 spectators to the city centre – and, what Nebiolo wants, he usually gets.

Schultz quick to justify his Test recall

Cricket
ANDY COLQUHOUN
reports from Pretoria
Australia 227 v South Africa

Sixteen months after his last Test, Brett Schultz took four wickets to put South Africa on top after the first day of the Third and final Test at Centurion Park yesterday.

The fast bowler's 4 for 52, South Africa's best of the series, helped his side bowl out Australia for 227 after they put them in to bat. Allan Donald weighed in with 3 for 60 and, when he had

reached 50 in a Test in 19 innings spanning 15 months.

An 80-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Steve Waugh and Greg Blewett, who put on 385 in the first Test, revived Australia but Blewett was caught behind as he attempted to cut the off-spinner Pat Symcox. Schultz then took three wickets in as many overs. Steve Waugh (67) was caught down the leg side by Richardson – although replays suggested the ball had flicked his pad – and Michael Bevan and Shane Warne were adjudged lbw in the space of four balls.

Donald's landmark came in

Fogarty's Ducati becomes the bike to beat

Motorcycling
ANDREW MARTIN

Never one to underestimate his own worth, Carl Fogarty embarks on a new World Superbike season tomorrow at Phillip Island in Australia with an extra reserve of confidence. Reunited with the Ducati that carried him to two successive world titles, the 30-year-old rider from Blackburn will prove a fearfully hard man to beat in the 12-round championship which culminates at Sentul, Indonesia, in October.

Fogarty's famously intense glare will be hard to shift from the prize that eluded him last season during an unhappy flirtation with the Honda RC45.

Yesterday he trailed in fifth fastest in qualifying, behind the rapid Kawasaki-mounted pair of Akira Yanagawa and Simon Crafar. The former took provisional pole, three-tenths of a second inside the lap record set by Aaron Slight last year.

Fogarty faces a sterling challenge from the Yamaha SBK-mounted Colin Edwards and the swaggering Scott Russell. The latter was unconsciously dumped from the Suzuki 500cc grand prix team last season, but cruised to victory at Daytona last week. He also beat Fogarty to the 1993 WSB title and is clearly comfortable aboard the YZF750. Ever modest, Russell declared this week: "I'm back and I'm going to do some damage in WSB this season. I'm already getting ready to beat those Ducatis."

Such bluster cuts little ice with Fogarty, however. "He [Russell] won't beat me or my team-mate [Edwards] this season," Fogarty said. "I'll aim to win the title back for British fans – whatever it takes."

Admirably patriotic and all that, but there are other British

challengers who may also be waving the Union Jack from the rostrum this season.

Fogarty's Ducati Corse team-mate, Neil Hodgson, a promising 23-year-old from Burnley, has much to prove, as does Jamie Whitham, who beat car last season to narrowly miss out on the British Superbike title. First he must tame his GSX-R Suzuki, however.

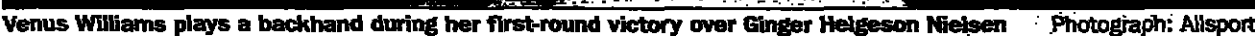
Fogarty may not have found the Castrol Honda to his taste, but the pairing of last season's runner-up, Slight, with the volatile American, John Kocinski, should mount a formidable challenge.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK									
TODAY Football 3.0 unless stated FA MEMBERS' TROPHY Quarter-finals Bolton Aston v Grimsby ; Queens Park Rangers Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; Sheff Sat Sheff Wed v Sheff Sat ; 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JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Key Biscayne

Extra in

Incentive



■ Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, has had a scan on his injured wrist and has been advised to rest for seven days. He is still hopeful of playing in the Davis Cup tie against Zimbabwe at Crystal Palace on 4-6 April. Britain's captain, David Lloyd, has dropped Mark Petchey from his original squad of five, but has the option of restoring the Essex player if Rusedski is unfit.

Jets' guard suspended

The Signal Inter-Services Championship at Portsmouth ended yesterday in a surprise 2-1 defeat of the Army by the Royal Navy after a tense final game.

cial games against Sutton Coldfield today and their rearranged game tomorrow against Trojans. Lynnette Smith stands by to deputise. Slough trail Ipswich by four points but have a game in hand. Assuming Slough win their two games this weekend, the title is likely to be decided

His 19th bout should give a significant indication of Brodie's calibre against the Commonwealth

Brodie, 22, played football for both Manchester United and City boys' teams until his sporting direction diverted after his

The Leander crew will be stroked by James Cracknell, with Rory Morrison, a dark blue and pink journeyman who emerged over the winter as a serious contender for the single sculls. Richard Hamilton and Ben Hunt Davis, who both showed in the Olympic eight last year, will hope to blend well enough with Pinsent and Redgrave to be considered for the new coxless four, which the golden pair have said they will turn to for at least this season.

In spite of its strong tradition of continental crews, this is the first Head Race to have a American entry. The Schuykill Navy team, based in Philadelphia, is a veteran crew, with Stan Drea, the World single sculls silver medalist, and Chris Blackwall, the 1967 Oxford Blue, on board. The Oxford and Cambridge women's and lightweight crews will race their Boat races at Henley tomorrow. The Dark Blue crews have not done well in recent years, but, with radical changes in preparation, may be able to reverse the trend.

8 3240-F MEN LOUGH (300) L Saffari 5 11 2
9 8 5700 LEACH THE CLOUDS (51) J Upson 5
10 0020-F RINUS MAJOR (22) D McCain 6 11
11 73-3 VADLANS (FR) (21) S Brookstar 6
12 11 70 MONTANI (18) Lucy Henegs 4 11 0
13 12 3500 JESSOLLE (29) G Richards 5 10 11
14 73-08 PETT BLAUGHE (21) R Lee 8 10 11
15 300 KINNECASH (12) P Bowen 4 10 8
TASRZ 125 P Assoc. 4 10 3
- 15 declared -
BETTING: 7-4 Florio, 4-1 Taltelhaft, 11-2 Maitland
Crash Senior, Kinnecash, 15-1 Alfthry Pilot, 20-

1.2	S Wythe	2	34142-5	CAMITH
	R Supple	3	P.55021	CUMBER
	D Wicks	4	330215	ANDER
1.2	A Dobbin	5	2-23230	SOUTHA
	P Hyatt	6	81CP-1	FRICKLE
	R Burns (7)	7	P-P0632	DOLIND
	W Marston			
	I Connors (7)			
	G Peters			

5-1 Vadevays, 10-1 El
Jessole, 25-1 others

Minimum weight: 100.
BETTING: 7-4 Frickley,
General Parthing, 14-

R Johnson
 (FR) (25) (5) T Heddy 7 12 0.....A Dobbin
 CHALLENGE (59) (5) T Eassary 8 11 12.....J. Wyer
 (25) (5) J Macie 10 11 1.....W Marton
 (11) G Baking 7 10 13.....Richard Guest V
 (2) G Richards 11 19 10.....R Dunwoody
 (5) (5) T Caldwell 10 10 0.....Michael Brennan (3)
 - 7 declared -
 Net Average weight: Dollars 80r 90r.
 10-30 Southampton, 7-2 Cambridge Challenge, 5-1
 Camltov, 18-1 Andermott, 20-1 Dollars

4.55 LIGHTWOOD GREEN HALL
(CLASS E) £4,000 added

1. 210-083 SELADIN (S) (B) D Gaudin 5 12 2
2. 4601/0-1 WYNN'S PRIDE (T) R Hollinshead 6 11 1
3. 00-0363 INDIAN QUEST (S) G Gaudin 8 13 1
4. 01202 NEWVAUX (S) G Richards 6 11 4

R Johnson	11	OUTRAGE
	12	RAMELLIN
Pearl Eben, 8-1.1 lb	13	CF/ SEE MORE
Zachary, 32-1 others	14	GO CAHO
	15	4 THE LIGHT
DIAP HURDLE	16	0 DURY D
3m	17	MAZZEL
	18	PERNITE
R Dunwoody		
0 S Wyne		
M Marston		
A Dobble		
		BEST: 3-1 Shropshire
		Lightmaker, 6-1 Eagle
		20-1 Marmaduke

US AFFAIRS James S 11.5 Mr A Brown
Brown S 11.5 E Lee (3)
James S 99.9 Mr A Brown
James S 11.5 E Hubbard (3)
TS (C)A J Boyd 411.2 C Finn
WATER (C)S Boley 412.2 D J Keregan (6)
TA (X) J Cassard 410.11 HT Eggen (7)
B A Boley 410.11 S Melrose (7)
N.J. City 410.13 C Elliott (7)

-18 dead-end-

Bale, 7-1 Arctic Fox, 9-2 Dakota Hi, 11-2 The
Horse, 8-1 Gallopah, 14-1 Daisy Dawn, Go Calves.

emerged over the winter as a serious contender for the single sculls. Richard Hamilton and Ben Hunt Davis, who both rowed in the Olympic eight last year, will hope to blend well enough with Pinsent and Redgrave to be considered for the new coxless four, which the Olympic pair have said they will turn up for at least this season.

First Head Race to have a American entry. The Schuykill Navy team, based in Philadelphia, is a veteran crew, with Sean Drea, the World single sculls silver medalist, and Chris Blackwall, the 1967 Oxford Blue, on board. The Oxford and Cambridge women's and lightweight crews will race their Boat races at Henley tomorrow. The Dark Blue crews have not done well in recent years, but, with radical changes in preparation, may be able to reverse the trend.

[illegible]

3.10: 1. ARTFUL DANE (M Roberts) 10-1;
2. Silverado 8-1 tie; 3. Sharp Shinned 10-2;
5. Sandmore Chestnut 14-1, 23 ran. 7.
6. (M Heaton-Ellis, Wroughton). Total:
£12.70. £3.90. £2.60. £2.20. £4.50. DF:
£27.00. CSP: £17.78. Ties: £786.48. Tie:
£11.70.

3.40: 1. NITKAM (M Moss) 11-2; 2. Nam-
uruss 11-1; 3. Heritage 8-4 tie. 8. Ru-
1, 2. (H Hils, Lambourn). Total: £3.40;
£1.00. £1.70. £1.00. DF: £13.80. CSP:
£28.58.

4.10: 1. ZARESHU (M Roberts) 7-2; 2. The
Buffy 5-1; 3. Monomelot 12-1. 8. ran.
9. (C Bzcan, Newmarket). Total: £3.40;
£1.00. £1.30. £2.70. DF: £9.70. CSP:
£12.47.

Adapted Not won. Pool of £8,707.00 car-
ried forward to Doncaster today.
Placepot: £135.90. Outright: £16.20.

RACING

1.50: 1. READY MONEY CREEK (U Osborn) 11-2; 2. **Absolutely Equine** 11-4 far; 3. **Memoranda** 7-2. 1.44 ran. 1/4, 3/4 (O Shewald, upon Lambeau). Total: \$4,600; \$1.30, \$1.40, \$1.90. Dual Forecast: \$6.70. Computer Straight Forecast: \$18.85. Trax: \$9.50.

2.55: 1. LINTON ROCKS (P Powell) 6-5 far; 2. **Hutchins Boy** 11-3; 3. **Amber Valley** 11-2. 8 ran. 2, 2 1/2. (Thompson Jones, upon Lambeau). Total: \$2,200; \$1.30, \$1.20. Dual Forecast: \$2.20. Computer Straight Forecast: \$2.78.

2.55: 1. QUINN EAGLE (Jame Ebers) 8-1; 2. **Lively River** 11-5 far; 3. **Foodies Last** 11-9. 19 ran. 2, 14. (M O'Donoghue, upon Lambeau). Total: \$1,200; \$2.10, \$1.40, \$3.00. Dual Forecast: \$12.50. Computer Straight Forecast: \$12.50.

3.25: 1. FOX POINTER (Mr R. Thornton) 7-4; 2. Arrowhead 100-30; 3. Ryeing Cuplet 2-1; 7 m. 18; 21. (Mrs L. Egan, New Britain) 7-6; 22. \$1.50, \$1.50, \$1.50, Dual Forecast: \$5.40. Computer Straight Forecast: \$7.16.

4.00: 1. TERAQ (T J Murphy) 9-4; 2. Change The Act 9-2; 3. High Altitude 2-1. 5 m. 58; 22. (M. Pae, Westington) 20; 22. \$9.50, \$1.50, \$1.50, Dual Forecast: \$6.70. Computer Straight Forecast: \$11.33. NYC Member Boston.

4.35: 1. RED PAJA (J. Osborn) 2-1; 2. Feisty Sharp 13-8; 3. Providence 10-1. 4 m. 31; 16. (P Mitchell, Newmarket) 20; 22. \$1.50, \$1.50, \$1.50, Computer Straight Forecast: \$5.27.

KELSO

1.40: 1. SON OF ARKHAM (J Suppl) 5-4 1st; 2. Bad Classic 5-1; 3. Clash of Swords 5-1, 12 p.m. 22 1/2. Miss A Shubert. Totals: \$1.70; \$1.10, \$2.00, Dual Forecast \$10.60. Computer: Straight Forecast: \$68.33; Tot: \$7.80.

2.15: 1. AMERICAN NERVO (S Story) 9-1; 2. Mr Kolback 2-1; 3. Real Toney 7-4 1st, 2 p.m. 5. (B Affair). Totals: \$6.40; \$1.30, \$1.60, \$1.80. DP: \$20.90. Computer: Straight Forecast: \$23.42.

2.45: 1. MONSIEUR FORTIE (J Reilly) 7-1; 2. Inglishman 1-1 1st; 3. Our Robert 10-1. 6 p.m. 3/4. U. U. U. Totals: \$7.60; \$2.00, \$1.80, \$2.00. DP: \$26.20. CSE: \$31.64. 1st: \$292.67. Tot: \$118.50. Mr Gong: Public Aff. & Sports.

[illegible]

150

The fan who now calls the shots

We have our drama, too. Someone set the main stand alight one night and growls and cries. There is the thrill of glory by association, players who have gone on to better things - Welsh international Paul Bodin of World Cup penalty miss fame, Jason Dodd at Southampton and the venerable Tony Martens football at Twerton. You know, with a little bit of City stalwart Tony Ricketts as manager and Granley Dickson's less refined brother, a few left-overs, are going to be City tenants - and a replacement for Frome Road will be built. Once again I will have to look for teams. In the tradition, with hope to support them here.



0800 111 210



The rat race

Trapping of a rodent fails to faze Venus Williams, page 28

sport

Soar points way
Phil Shaw talks to a Forest fan with a mission, page 30

Loko blocks Liverpool's route to Rotterdam final

Football
NICK DUXBURY

They were still going loopy over Patrick Loko in the French capital yesterday when the news came through that the inmates from Anfield will be the next visitors to Paris St-Germain in the semi-finals of the Cup-Winners' Cup.

The striker with a history of psychiatric problems scored a

hat-trick in Athens on Thursday night and now stands between Liverpool and their first European final since the Heysel disaster of 1985.

After disposing of the flaky SK Brann, Roy Evans is well aware of the threat posed by the 27-year-old Frenchman. The holders can also call on the Brazilians, Leonardo and Rai.

"One thing for sure if that we will be watching them several times between now and the

game," the Liverpool manager said. "French football is going through a renaissance and to get a result like they did in Greece is no mean feat."

The 3-0 win against AEK Athens completed a remarkable turnaround in the fortunes of Loko, who needed a psychiatrist's couch two years ago after suffering a mental breakdown brought on by the pressure of his transfer to PSG and domestic difficulties.

European Cup semi-finals
Borussia Dortmund v Manchester United
April 8 (9pm) Second leg 23 April
Cup-Winners' Cup semi-finals
Liverpool v Paris St-Germain
April 23 (8pm) First leg 24 April
Second leg 25 April
UEFA Cup semi-finals
Tottenham v Borussia Dortmund
April 8 (9pm) Second leg 22 April

Evans will take Liverpool to Paris on Thursday 10 April, with Loko and Co delighted to be at a "mythical" Anfield a fortnight later. "For us it is great. The stadium in Liverpool has such

history and such atmosphere," Jean Francois Domergue, the PSG general director, said.

If they overcome PSG, Liverpool will meet Barcelona - coached by the former England manager Bobby Robson - or Fiorentina in the final in Rotterdam on 14 May.

Alex Ferguson was granted his wish of an away first leg against Borussia Dortmund in the semi-final of the European Cup. "I am quite happy with

that," the Manchester United manager said. "If we do our job properly and play as well as we have done in away games, then we are going to give ourselves a great chance."

The Dortmund coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, said the fact his team were at home on 9 April was irrelevant. "It doesn't matter at all whether we play at home or away in the first leg. We're just as strong away as at home. Our game in Anfield

proved that. We're not afraid of English football."

Dortmund won both legs of their quarter-final against the French side, winning the first match in Germany 3-1 and the second leg 1-0. Waiting for the winners will be either the holders, Juventus, or Ajax, whose semi-final pairing is a repeat of last year's final.

Monaco, who sent Newcastle packing from the Uefa Cup, have been drawn against In-

ternazionale, while Tenerife face Germany's Schalke 04 in the other semi-final.

Manchester United and Liverpool are to be given a TV breather. In order to ease the clubs' heavy programme, Sky will televise United's Premier League game at Leicester (kick-off 11.15am) and Liverpool's home game with Spurs (6.15pm) on 3 May instead of exercising their option to switch the games to Sunday or Monday.

Sounness angry at Le Tissier call-up

MARK BURTON

Glenn Hoddle's inclusion of Matt Le Tissier in his England squad for next week's friendly against Mexico was always likely to provoke controversy but the campaign for the Channel Islander's international career to be on hold, perhaps permanently, acquired an unlikely cheerleader yesterday.

Graeme Sounness, Le Tissier's manager at Southampton, thinks the midfielder should not be called up, but his concern is over fitness and not ability.

The England coach told a news conference yesterday that Le Tissier had confirmed his fitness to play, but Sounness had said after Wednesday's defeat at Chelsea that Le Tissier was not able to play 90 minutes because of foot and groin problems. Sounness said on *Radio 5 Live*:

"I spoke to the player yesterday after he received the call from Glenn Hoddle. He was going to tell Glenn that he didn't feel he could do himself justice because of the injury. But Glenn Hoddle has insisted on putting out a story totally different to the one Matt told me."

Le Tissier himself had said after the Chelsea game that he wanted to play for England. At his news conference Hoddle said: "I've spoken to Matt and he assures me he could've played at Chelsea. He said that the injury has been no different to how it's been for the last six or seven games. We'll chat when we get together. Whatever reasons for Graeme not playing him aren't for me to comment. If Graeme wants to speak he can alert me to the situation. We weren't alerted so we've selected him. The fact that he played on Saturday and came off the bench at Chelsea doesn't suggest the player was injured."

Hoddle has already made clear that every player selected for the Mexico game will be ordered to attend the squad's Buckinghamshire hotel so that the England medical team can check their fitness. That is to prevent fit players being with-

drawn by their clubs, with Hoddle pointing out: "If they can play for their clubs and not for us, that would be unfair."

Hoddle took pains to indicate he did not believe such a thought would cross the minds of managers. He said: "A lot of them were international players and would not have been happy if it had happened to them."

Sheffield United are poised to sign Aston Villa defender Carl Tiler after the clubs agreed an undisclosed fee for him. The Blades' manager, Howard Kendall, will discuss personal terms with the 27-year-old centre-back next week.

England Under-21 coach, Peter Taylor, has named five uncapped players in his squad for the 1 April friendly against Switzerland at Swindon. The Middlesbrough goalkeeper, Ben Roberts, is included for the first time along with West Ham's Rio Ferdinand, Sunderland's Michael Bridges, and Blackburn's Marlon Brown. Middlesbrough's Phil Stamp had previously been selected but had to withdraw injured.

Roy Hodgson is planning a clear out at Blackburn Rovers, with Lars Bohinen on his hit list. The manager-in-waiting wants to move out half a dozen players who are not regularly in new blood.

Uwe Rösler's Manchester City days could be over this week. He may be swapped for the Sunderland striker, Craig Russell, before the transfer deadline. The German has been a target of the Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, who wants to sign a goalscorer before Thursday.

Tony Yeboah's future at Leeds looks even more uncertain after he pulled out of their squad. The Ghanaian striker, who last week threw his shirt at the Leeds bench after being substituted at Tottenham, declared himself unfit with a hamstring problem for the visit to Sheffield Wednesday.

Leeds' manager, George Graham, said the club's medical staff could not find anything wrong with the player.

Newcastle notation success, page 24



England's Neil Back (right) stops Canada's captain John Graf in his tracks during England's 33-12 victory yesterday on the opening day of the Hong Kong Sevens tournament

Weakened Wales held by Namibia

Rugby Union

Drizzle and cloud hung over the Rugby World Cup Sevens yesterday but failed to dampen spirits as the last seven tournament to be staged in Hong Kong under British rule began.

The first day's matches were, in essence, warm-up matches with no one knocked out but the results and number of tries scored deciding the seeding for today's second round.

Wales were the main hard luck story of the first day, drawing 12-12 with Namibia and then losing 26-24 to Western Samoa despite leading with less than a minute to go. That left them ranked 16 of the 24 teams, below the likes of Zimbabwe, Tonga and the Cook Islands.

Ravaged by injuries, they seemed set for victory against Samoa thanks to a try with 45 seconds remaining by Gareth Wyatt but they were penalised for the kick-off not going 10 yards, and then allowed Semo Sidi to break through three tried challenges for the decisive score.

Wales now face the top seeds Fiji, seven-time Hong Kong winners, in the early hours of this morning. Namibia will again be among the opposition in the group stage which decides who reaches the quarter-finals.

The eight winners of the groups go into tomorrow's knock-out competition with the second and third placed teams going into consolation competitions.

Wales could stake a claim for the title of the first day when

Pontypridd's Kevin Morgan took the ball behind his own posts before firing a gap to race just over 100 metres for the score against Namibia.

England, defending the title they surprisingly won at Murrayfield four years ago, had a relatively easy day with two wins over Canada, 33-12, and Zimbabwe, 26-7. Seeded six, they play the Cook Islands and Canada today.

The only bad news for on England was the injury to Richard Hill, who limped off early in the Zimbabwe game after aggravating an old ankle problem.

Ireland lost both their games, 31-22 against Argentina and 38-5 to South Africa, to be seeded 18th. The good news is that they are in the same group as the hosts, Hong Kong. The bad news is that they have to play South Africa again.

Scotland, seeded ninth, will face Australia again. It took the special skills of David Carmichael to save the Wallabies from defeat in the first game. Coming on as a substitute with his side trailing 19-5 he led the comeback and his late conversion levelled the scores at 19-19. The other team in their group is Portugal.

Sevens experts Fiji lived up to their billing as favourites, topping the seedings after totalling 104 points without reply.

New Zealand, winners of the Hong Kong Sevens for the past three years, were never stretched as they defeated Japan 47-14 and Tonga 21-7. As a quirk of the seedings, they play the same teams again.

Results, Sporting Digest, page 31

IN MONDAY'S INDEPENDENT



"Our guys were underprepared when they reached Zimbabwe. Some of them perhaps hadn't done enough for that Test series because they'd put bats down and they hadn't practised for two months. Their skills weren't honed sufficiently even for a trip to what people were classing as a minor Test nation."

Mike Gatting is the Monday interview

Confusion over demolition of Crystal Palace

Athletics
MIKE ROWBOTTOM

Campaigners defending the athletics facilities at Crystal Palace hailed a major victory yesterday after reports that the threat of imminent demolition had been removed and a pledge made to install a new £3.5m indoor training centre at the site.

But the picture was thrown into confusion last night when the Sports Council issued a statement saying that no decisions over the future use of Crystal Palace had yet been taken. "Athletics is still an option," a spokesman said. "But the whole business will be considered at a further meeting involving Bromley Borough Council on 12 May."

The Bromley council, which is due to take over the Crystal Palace lease from the Sports Council, had previously announced its intention to save Elm by demolishing the National Stadium's main stand, track and indoor training area.

The storm of protest has this week succeeded in winning support from the Sports minister, Iain Sproule, who responded to a widespread lobbying campaign and pledged his support for the athletics facilities, saying that it was his intention that the facilities continued to be provided until better ones were on offer elsewhere.

But yesterday there were reports that the Sports Council's executive director, Derek Casey, had said that the stadium and track would remain and that the new facility would be built. Campaigners, who had presented a 12,500-signature petition at the House of Commons on Tuesday reacted with delight.

"It is great news for athletics in this country," said Richard Simmons, the national sprint coach who has led the protests.

"Some hard negotiations lie ahead but I hope that people will now be able to go forward together for the good of sport."

"We owe that to the thousands of young people whose talent and fulfilment we have the privilege and responsibility of developing." If the demolition plans go through, London would be left without a major athletics venue pending the reconstruction of Wembley, and no indoor facilities.

Simmons thanked the campaigners who had helped to bring the matter to prominence in recent weeks. They included the former Olympic athletes Steve Ovett and Dave Bedford and current athletes such as Donna Fraser and Judy Oakes.

There was all-party support for the campaign from Terence Higgins, the Tory backbencher, Kate Hoey (Labour) and Menzies Campbell (Liberal Democrat). Hoey, a major supporter and herself a former high jumper for Northern Ireland, added: "I'm pleased that the Sports Council is committed to supporting the athletics who use Crystal Palace. The proposals announced will definitely move the sport forward and give a great boost to athletics in London and the south."

Sally Gunnell, the former world and Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion and current British team captain, added: "I am absolutely delighted."

"Right from the age of 12 when my dad used to drive me all the way from our farm in Chigwell to train there I knew there was nowhere else like the Palace. It's vital for all the athletes in London and the south that it will continue to keep going. It's especially good news for the future generations of athletes and that is why I have backed the campaign 100 per cent."

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Air Turbulence Scrambling to disembark.

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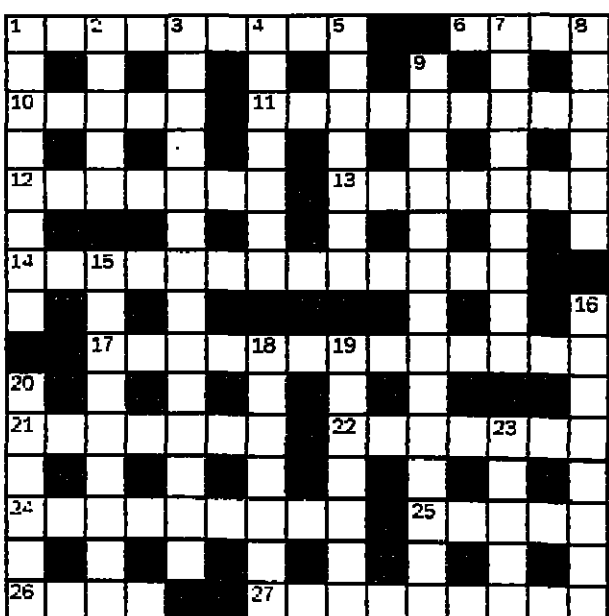
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3253, Saturday 22 March

By Phil

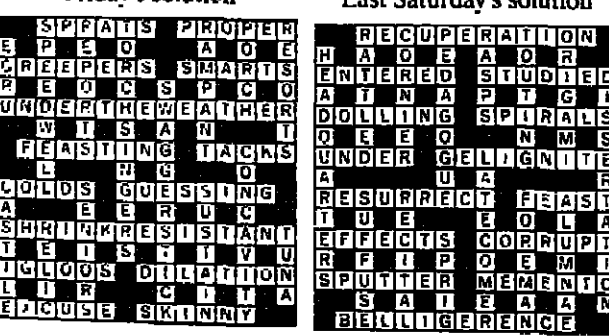
ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



- Shady types dressed up in denim mode (4,5)
- Early chieftain not working with angles, initially (4)
- Farewell announcement (that is presented by Unionist) (5)
- One, huge, absorbs first of punches without expression (9)
- Place for washing sporting equipment, taking time in the middle (4,3)
- Brings warmth to the ears afresh (7)
- Superior attitude in broadcasts with good contests (4, 3, 6)
- Novel implication of incest? (4, 3, 6)
- Failure to identify first-rate ballad one recalled (7)
- Almost put up with receiving one Conservative answer (7)
- Disrupting most of University is causing annoyance (9)
- Arab with two receiving King, Ace and Queen (5)
- Part of year occurring in the later months (4)
- Booster ready to swallow water containing a drop of Pernod, in other words (2, 2, 5)
- Passed on rhythm for one tramping (8)
- Damp vapour conceals nothing (5)
- Sacred peak? SOS - a man turns up drunk here! (5, 9)
- Part of finger fixed round book (4,3)
- Traveller entering European city upset ruler (7)
- Mel? Donkey tucks into fine grain with energy (9)
- Reluctant to state limits of statute (6)
- Watches for breaking stories undeviatingly (2, 3, 4, 5)
- What will echo list curi-est? (4, 3, 6)
- Dancing skater is a star (8)
- Rodrigo's farewell, penning a grand few pieces (7)
- Split up hellish cult? (7)
- Greek character embraced by former Catholic (6)
- Say friend in France turned up picture (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive barbed copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: James Bowdler, London WC1; Richard Dean, Altham; G Holdings, Edgware; Erik Read, Rowley Regis; J McEwan, Churchdown.